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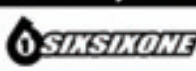
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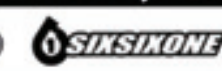
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COVER:

With wins at Hawkstone and Mallory Park, Ken Roczen's currently the winningest MX2 rider in Blighty © Ray Archer

CONTENTS:

Peekaboo! David Knight pops into sight at the opening round of the BESC in Gloucestershire © Nuno Laranjeira

CONTENTS

REGULARS

- 012 NEWS**
All the latest news and views from around the off-road world plus your chance to win sweet stuff
- 023 PRO PROBE**
Josh Coppins answers your questions
- 025 MANO O MANO**
Who is better – K-Dub or Doctor Trey?
There's only one way to find out...
- 027 BLARNEY**
It's wet, wet, wet in not so sunny Ireland
- 029 JONTY'S BOX**
It's all change in the WEC or the EWC as it's now known – see what we mean?
- 032 STUFF**
Say hello to The Bear...
- 034 MONSTER HUNT!**
Our last lookout for a frankly foxy, feisty and friendly female to be the next Monster Energy grid girl
- 036 RANT!**
Entertain us with your letters and you could win awesome Etnies and marvellous Muc-Off
- 068 SCHOOL OF CROCK**
Gordy teaches us two ways to skin this particular cat. Inside or out? The choice is yours...
- 078 BURNICLE'S BEAT**
Tall tales about the bodacious Brad Lackey, his bushy beard and another Brad's dad, Phil Anderson
- 084 WALKER'S WORLD**
Set-up secrets with our former factory wrench...
- 088 MAGAZINE MACHINE**
What's purple and breathes fire? It's not Barney the dinosaur! Suttly says hello to his new ride...
- 090 SHED OF DREAD 2**
Braaaaap! The SoD's finally a runner
- 100 DBR STATESIDE**
Awesome race coverage plus the inside word from the Land of the Free. God bless America...
- 161 RAGE**
Youth motocross action from around the UK
- 168 MAC211**
Billy Mac takes first blood in Aussie Pro Nats!

FEATURES

- 056 ALTERED BEASTS!**
We test two of the best MX1 bikes in the country head-to-head to see which is better
- 062 FRESH THINKING!**
Why Matt Bates from the MCF might just be the saviour of British motocross
- 070 JC SUPERSTAR!**
We take a long look at the career of MX1 old boy Josh Coppins who's starting his 15th year of world championship competition on the Aprilia V-twin
- 094 PC SUPERSTAR!**
Aussie madman Robbie Maddison lets us into his crazy world and talks us through some of his maddest stunts
- 116 EBB AND FLOW!**
After taking one step backwards to go two steps forwards, Elliott Banks-Browne's found domestic bliss on the DB Racing Honda...
- 122 TRADING PLACES!**
American teenager Ben LaMay's enjoying his rookie year with Embo's Samsung Yamaha squad
- 128 CLOSE ENCOUNTERS!**
The newly-renamed Enduro World Championship is shaping up to be one of the closest for years

REPORTS

- 040 MXGP**
The 2010 MX GP season kicks off in Bulgaria and we're there to witness all the action...
- 134 BESC**
Britain's brand-new off-road series starts in Gloucestershire with a flaming DK double whopper!
- 140 HIMX**
Ken rocks 'em with an awesome performance at Hawkstone Park's annual pre-season knees up
- 146 RED BULL PRO NATS**
Bad Brad goes double tops at fantastic Foxhill as the Red Bull Pro Nationals get outta the gate
- 152 BRIT MX**
Seconds out – round two! The Maxxis series heads to Mallory where Roczen and Bobryshev shine

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COMMENT

It's been another WFO kind of month here at DBR with back-to-back-to-back race meetings at Hawkstone, Foxhill and then Mallory Park ensuring even more hours spent cruising the highways and byways of Britain. In fact, at times I've been seriously weighing up the pros and cons of selling my house and moving into Trandawg™ for the season – although I don't fancy sharing a grubby mattress with Suttly and his 570 Husaberg. Let's be honest, nothing breaks up a relationship quicker than introducing a sexy Swedish lovely into the equation...

Anyways, all the above has got my tired brain working overtime but not about the possibility of a menage-a-trois involving Suttly and a 250lb Swede (although lose the Deputy Dawger and trade in the big 'Berg for, say, 125lb Scandinavian twins and we could be in business). What have Hawkstone, Foxhill and Mallory all got in common? That's right, they've all been venues for British GPs with Hawkstone and Foxhill representing the old-school approach and Mallory very much at the forefront of the purpose-built, fully facilitated-up new way of thinking.

At the moment the 2010 British GP is up in the air – appropriate really seeing as the widely touted new venues at Newport and Chepstow both now appear to have been pie in the sky. But all the signs are that we definitely will have a grand prix this season, although the date and venue have still yet to be finalised. What it boils down to is that Youthstream – who own the rights to the world championship – recognise the importance of a British GP if their series is to have full credibility. And if they want a British GP then they'll bloody well get a British GP which is basically good news all round.

YS's vision of an uber-professional series has brought increased sponsorship and global TV coverage to racing. On the flipside, traditionally well-attended events like the British GP have seen a fall in support among paying spectators who don't want to watch their motocross on purpose-built tracks like Donington and Mallory. Us Brits like to go about things in a different way – we're an island race and have never been fully sucked into the whole Europe deal. We're still walking around with pounds in our pockets while the other side of the Channel everything's been Euro'd and I can nip across the road to the greengrocers and buy my spuds by the good old imperial pound if I want rather than by Brussels' preferred kilo. So why not go about a British GP our own way as well?

Successive promoters have tried and failed to take a British GP into the black at Donington and Mallory. We know Youthstream demand a big wad for the rights to run a GP and if a promoter wants to cover this and still turn a coin then they need the fans – and to get the fans they need to give them what they want. And historically that's been proven to be the best riders in the world bashing bars at somewhere like Foxhill or Hawkstone. So my big idea – which, I know, is hardly original – is first up to ensure the British GP is held every year in mid summer when we've got the best chance of good weather. Then we stage it at preferably, for me, Foxhill. Youthstream make do with a temporary infrastructure and maybe renegotiate their fee in exchange for a thriving, packed-out grand prix and we all take it on the chin that there's a chance of lots of mud and some traffic chaos.

So what do you think? Pie in the sky of my own? To be honest there's probably next to bugger-all chance of it happening but it's no more fanciful than, say, a British GP at Chepstow – which we now know there's bugger-all chance of at all...

Sean



NEWSHAWK!UND!

A RATHER FINE BUT DEFINITELY DIRTY DELIVERY OF OFF-ROAD NEWS FROM THE DESPICABLE DESK OF THE DAWGINATOR...

It's on! It's off! It's back on again! Like the central heating system in my house the British MX GP doesn't know whether it's coming or going this month as one minute it's on and the next it's back off again. But it's not me and the missus fighting over the ambient temperature of my poxy abode that's causing stress to motocross fans across the nation but rather a disagreement between former British GP promoter RHL and Youthstream.

After RHL reportedly 'lost' Chepstow as a venue for their May fixture rumours were running rife over where the race would or could be held. Most thought that Mallory Park would be back on the cards but then rumours started ricocheting through the MX world of a US GP happening on the exact same date as the British round – so just what is the truth?

Well, the American GP at Glen Helen is definitely a goer and will definitely happen on the weekend originally set aside for the British GP. If you're thinking we're now not gonna get a round of the MX1 and MX2 world championships then don't despair because Britain will most likely be getting a GP this year – probably on **September 11/12** and probably the last round of the championship which means we'll probably see the MX1/MX2 and WMX champions crowned on British soil. Probably! It seems that Youthstream are peachy-keen jelly beans when it comes to

ensuring the future of the British GP and we hear that Giuseppe Luongo and the gang are meeting with the right people at Mantova to ensure it all happens. Watch this space and stay tuned to dirtbikerider.com for an update!

In some ways the cancellation – sorry postponement – of the British GP couldn't have come at a sweeter time for Luongo as it gives Youthstream a great opportunity to show American citizens just how great a series the world championship is. Falling on a free weekend on the AMA National schedule it's hoped that some of the leading American riders will line up alongside the MX GP elite. If that does happen surely it will act as a teaser to the full-on world series Luongo envisaged when he put back the start of the 2011 GP series so it begins after the end of the AMA supercross championship allowing riders on both sides of the pond to do both.

There are obviously a lot of politics involved behind the scenes but at face value this should be one of the best motocross races of the year so it's probably well worth checking out the price of airline tickets to LAX if you fancy an early summer holiday. Or why not take in a California ride holiday at the same time as the GP with one of the more reputable motocross vacation providers like www.mxheaven-usa.com or www.racesocal.com – just a thought...



Two quite frangible
cases abused fly

Get ready for the second
edition of Dirt 3-2-1!
Only joking, this is
obviously Glen Helen –
scene of the 2010 US GP



KTM winning a GP?
No surprises there...



Bry Mac's going
back to the ranks of
the privateers

The opening GP of the year in Seville threw up little in the way of surprises as KTM riders took wins in all six motos – Tony C and Max Nagl got one apiece in MX1 while Musquin and Laier took maximum points in the MX2 and WMX divisions. We've got a whopping 14-page GP special starting on page 40 so that's all I'm gonna say about it right here.

In the US SX series the scrap between Ryan Villopoto and Ryan Dungey continues to rage as neither one is ready to accept defeat. After 12 rounds Dungey holds a 21-point lead over Villopotatoman – who's won six races to Dungey's four – while Josh Hill sits third. In the East Lites championship Christophe Pourcel sits on a eight-point lead over Suzuki's Austin Stroupe with just two rounds left to run in that particular regional championship. Battling Brits Adam Chatfield and Steven Clarke currently sit 19th and 20th after somewhat disappointing seasons so far in the Stateside stadiums.

Over this side of the Atlantic another rider who's had a disappointingly slow start to his season is Pulse Racing/Golfandbet.com/Twisted 7 teamster Bryan MacKenzie who dropped down the MX2 division with the Husqvarna-supported team following a string of successful results in the premier MX1 class. With the T7 team left financially high and dry by a team partner they had no choice

but to let Irn Bry and tip-top tech BC go and do their own thing which looks like it's going to involve privately funded 250F Kawasakis.

"Unfortunately Twisted 7 through no fault of their own have been let down massively by an outside sponsor and the knock on effect of that has been catastrophic to the team," says Bry. "It really sucks as this year was shaping up to be one of the best ever for all the guys involved in what we called our 'operation'. All of our other sponsors have been great and gone beyond their call of duty to try make up for the shortfall but it has got to a point now where it just wasn't fair anymore so regrettably BC and I have decided to do our own thing and enjoy it for what it is."

MacKenzie's first race as a privateer will be the second round of the Red Bull Pro Nationals which has been rescheduled for **April 24/25** at Landrake followed by his home round of the Maxxis series that's all set to go off at Duns on May 2. Of course MacKenzie will now be eligible for the all-new NGK Privateer Cup that's currently led by Alan Keet (MX2) and Alex Snow (MX1) so that should give him a fresh challenge to chase.

Heavy rain and the forecast of plenty more of the wet stuff in the week leading up to the Red Bull Pro Nat's original date of April 3/4 put the organising MC Federation in an awkward situation. On the one hand a mudder is what British

motocross at this time of year is all about, on the other they weren't exactly relishing the prospect of towing riders and spectators into and out off the Cornish venue. The Pro Nats is all about presenting MX in the best possible light to a mainstream audience so the brave decision was made to push it back three weeks rather than poison the public with their first taste of the sport.

While you've got your diaries out other big events to attend in the next few weeks include the British Sidecarcross GP at Langrish on **April 17/18**, the second round of the British Enduro Sprint Championship at Rogers Hill Raceway in Bere Regis on **April 24/25** and the third round of the Wulfsport British Masters at Whitby on **May 9/10**.

Looking further ahead, DBR/T+MX mega event Dirt 3-2-1 is all set to make a welcome return and will be held once more at the awesome FatCat Motoparc on the weekend of **July 31/August 1**. The format's gonna be pretty similar to last year with MX, SX and Endurocross racing happening over the weekend along with regular FatCat practice sessions and hopefully a Sprint Enduro. The action's not just track-based though and there'll be tons of stuff happening in the pits including Try our Sport sessions, an awesome trade village and a bunch more stuff we're keeping top secret for the time being. We'll have more on this awesome event next month...



competition



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A SIGNED NITRO CIRCUS TEE PLUS A £350 PACKAGE OF NITRO CIRCUS, THOR, ALPINESTARS AND DC SHOES GOODIES ALL COURTESY OF FREESTYLEXTREME.COM

The guys – and girl – at **Nitro Circus** are always trying to go bigger, badder and better than anyone else which is a fearless philosophy that's shared by the good old boys at online extreme sports clothing store **Freestyle Xtreme**. And as luck would have it they're now stocking the full range of **Nitro Circus** casual clothes as well as all the other brilliant bits and awesome bobs that makes them one of Europe's leading online retailers.

And to celebrate the union of these two great companies **Freestyle Xtreme** have teamed up with the **Nitro Circus** crew, **THOR**, **Alpinestars** and **DC Shoes** to offer one lucky **DBR** reader the chance to win a pile of stuff that is, in the words of The Bear, "f**king amazing!" Basically the prize pack is worth in the region of **£350** and includes a Nitro Circus tee that's been signed by **Travis Pastrana**, **Jolene Van Vugt**, **Andy Bell** and **Tenacious J** as well as any four **Nitro Circus** tees, one **THOR** hoody, one **THOR** tee and a **THOR** beanie plus one pair of **DC** flip flops, one pair of **DC** shoes and a **DC** cap and finally an **Alpinestars** cap, a pair of **Alpinestars** board shorts and an **Alpinestars** tee. As Travis would say, "that's one hell of a prize!"



If you fancy getting your hands on all this sweet swag then what we want to know from you is this – which **Nitro Circus** member holds the world record for the longest ever big wheel backflip.

- Is it:
- A) Jolene Van Vugt
 - B) Streetbike Tommy
 - C) Travis Pastrana
 - D) Andy Bell

Once you've decided on your answer log on to www.dirtbikerider.com where you'll then need to follow the competition link, type in your answer, fill out the fields and hit transmit. The comp closes at noon on **May 13** with the first correct entry chosen totally at random getting this totally terrific prize.





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THE REVEREND GOOD TIMES!

THE PODIUM AT HAWKSTONE, VICTORY AT FOXHILL, THE RED PLATE AT MALLORY AND NINTH OVERALL IN BULGARIA – THE SEASON'S KICKED OFF IN STYLE FOR THE LEADER OF THE #45 HERD...

Words by **Jake Nicholls** Photo by **Sutty**

Well everything has well and truly kicked off in the motocross world in the last month and man is it exciting! The ole T+MX is full of write-ups and pictures of people relatively clean which is nice to see – the weather finally seems to have swung around a bit for us and the racing is intense already...

Hi everyone, hope you are all well and as excited as I am about all the racing going on at the minute! My total and utter obsession with everything motocross is well and truly in full swing now, my girlfriend is already well and truly sick of coming round my house as the only thing on TV is SX or MX at the minute and I'm not budging for her to watch some load of crapola like The Hills etc – no way!

Every Tuesday night after fight club the supercross is straight on. And also on Motors they've been replaying last year's GPs so I've been studying up on the tracks. I'm sure most people reading this have been too which is awesome. When I was younger MX was never on TV and I used to have to set up a tape for the SX that was on Channel 5 at like 4am – well that's what my parents thought anyway. I used to sneak down on a school night and watch it with barely any volume every time it was on...

So we've gotta appreciate the coverage our sport gets now and hopefully it will go from strength to strength. Since I last wrote things have been pretty flat-out – after Little Silver it was the Hawkstone Park International which went really well and I got on the podium there with a 5-3 scorecard. I went out for the Superfinal and was running fourth but pulled out after a few laps as the sun was so low and I was getting a bit wild trying to pass so I took a chill pill as I didn't wanna have a wreck and ruin the day. Then midweek in between that and Foxhill I got sick so I only managed to do a tiny bit of riding and was ill for the race on Sunday. But I put that in the back of my mind and put my head down and tried hard all day.

It was great to see Elliott have a good ride to get second overall behind me – he's stepped it up this year which is good for both of us and with Nunny still banging in some good rides too the MX scene in East Anglia is well and truly alive. The Eastern Centre series kicks off in a couple of weeks at one of our well known tracks – Blaxhall Pits – so the #45 Herd with be in full attendance for their first meeting of the year. Unfortunately, I won't be there as it's the week before Valkenswaard and I'm going straight to Belgium all going well after Mantova this weekend to practice in the sand.

After Foxhill it was onto Mallory Park for the second round of the Maxxis. All week the weather was so nice at home and the practice tracks were fast and borderline dusty all over the country – apart from Mallory of course. It rained all of Saturday there so the

track was pretty sloppy but I think it was a blessing in disguise as it turned a pretty average track into a line-infested tacky track. I found it pretty tough all day to relax and ride how I can but rode strong with good starts all day and came away with third overall behind the two factory Suz riders and got the red plate which is safely lent up in my bedroom now...

I trained hard early week after the race then Wednesday I drove down to Dijon in France to test suspension with WP ahead of Bulgaria. We had a good day even though the track was the roughest hardpacked track I've ever seen – it was not normal! Hills like Foxhill with an AMA SX-worthy set of natural whoops going up them – crazy but good for suspension. I drove home that Thursday night, so tired but totally pumped with the new set-up. Next day I went and rode with Brad Banks which was cool, he's back from injuring his foot badly and riding good already.

I took the weekend off to rest and to celebrate my birthday which was on the Sunday of Bulgaria so a week early the family and I went out with a couple of close friends for a nice big roast. But I couldn't stop thinking about the Herd riding at a local track called Blythburgh so as soon as I finished I drove straight there and strangely enough I had a set of kit in the back of the truck so I cruised a couple of laps on my mate's ex Alex Snow 450!

I didn't ride until Wednesday from then as the weather turned bad again so I just practised loads of starts and rode my turn track. Then 2am the next day I was on my way to Bulgaria. First GP of the year it's always nice to be early as there's lots to do with TV, pictures and signing on etc. Saturday went good and I was enjoying riding so much and it felt so good to be back on a proper track like Foxhill. I qualified ninth and on Sunday I went 10-8 for ninth overall which I'm very happy about – the pace was seriously quick as usual in the GPs so it was a shock to the system but seriously fun at the same time. I faded at the end of moto two after holding sixth for a while – I pushed so hard at the start of the race and the track was seriously rough but soon the fade won't happen and I'll be strong all the way.

So here I am Tuesday morning, the sun is shining so it's time for a run then fight club tonight – in the meantime I'll wash some goggles and grab a haircut as I've got a total Playmobil man hair do on the go at the minute! Ha ha! Tomorrow I'm driving to Belgium to ride in sand before Mantova then back there after with Josh.

Finally, I'd just like to wish Matt Ridgeway all the best in his recovery and my thoughts are with him.

Go hard #45!

J. Nicholls
dirtbikerider 15



Photo: Dimitri Code

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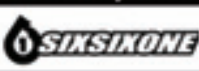
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Entry forms are now available for this summer's super-popular PAR Homes/Bache's Bargains-backed Wednesday evening MX series organised by Rhayader MC.

The three-round series takes place at the hillside circuit at Cwmythig Hill in the heart of Mid Wales on June 2, June 16 and July 7. The club run three groups per night with races for Experts, Seniors and Juniors plus Novices and Beginners. Each group has three races per night and there's a Grand Final 'dash for cash' for the leading Experts. There's a whopping £3000 prize fund per night and the top Expert can take home up to £900 – not bad for an evening's work!

With that sort of pay day on offer – plus the handy midweek dates – it's hardly surprising that the series always attracts some top pros with the likes of Brad Anderson, Gordon Crockard and Martin Barr pretty much regular fixtures there.

Entry forms are available from the club's revamped website – www.rdmcc.co.uk – and early entry is advised as classes fill up very quickly due to its popularity. For further info contact Andrew James on 01597 810396.



CROCKSTAR

ON THE PACE!

WE'RE TWO ROUNDS INTO THE MAXXIS BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIP AND GC'S IN TOUCH WITH THE LEADER – AND HE'S GETTING FASTER!

Words by Gordon Crockard Photo by Sutti

So after two rounds of the eight-round series I'm now fifth in the Maxxis British championship and 30 points off the leader. Each round offers 75 points and with the three-race format you can soon make up a gap in the points chase if you keep up at the front of ALL the motos and avoid putting in DNFs or very bad finishes.

My whole package is improving and I'm excited to see how much that affects my results at the Maxxis rounds. Now that we have a greater chance of some better weather ahead I would like to think that I'll be able to get some quality practice sessions put in at the track so I can work on correcting the faults that are stopping me from winning.

I love my Kawasaki 450. I have revalved forks and I have a Leo Vince exhaust system on it and the rest is totally stock. No bull! The team at Paul Bird Motorsport have developed a new motor for me to test in the next week and also have invested in some 'special' suspension for me to race with. I actually will spend some time in Belgium testing the suspension before we use it in a race environment.

It's the same old formula that is shining through yet again – get the results and everything else follows. Some people think they need to have everything else before they can get the results. That's where they are losing before they even get to the startline. It's all about the way you think and what attitude you carry in all your decisions.

I've been to a few races to try and progress my overall form. I went to Ken Winstanley's British Masters event at Mallory to get a shot at running with the Maxxis rivals who were also doing that meeting. I had never been to Mallory before either and I wanted to take the opportunity to race it before the Maxxis round there the following week. Sadly the weather threw down some heavy rain the night before racing and the organisers were faced with a tough job to provide a good track.

It turned out to be really good practice actually for the Maxxis the following week because it was also a rain sodden track.

At the KWS Masters I had a fourth and at the Maxxis I had a fourth, sixth and eighth.

The start as always is a big factor but I can confirm at the Maxxis at Mallory it was even more so of a big deal. I felt prior to the start of the championship that the first two rounds were going to be my worst results of the series. Mainly because I dislike a ripped, rutted slot car style circuit and that is what rounds one and two were always going to be due to the nature of the dirt and preparation method from the promoter and weather too. I expect to enjoy the next bunch of tracks and hope that also makes the results better.

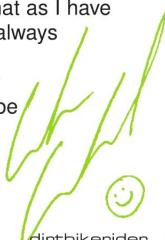
I have strangely had a total of three rear wheel punctures out of the seven races I have done this year here in Ireland. I got a DNF in the Irish Open championship that was actually down to a puncture where the rear tyre came completely off the rim. Not cool!

I did compete in the Ulster MX2 championship opening round on a KX250F that I borrowed out of Norman Watt's Motorcycles. It was Charlie Devlin's '09 that he traded in. I'm 14 stone so the wee bike did appear a tad slow compared to Martin Barr's Honda but I did enjoy the day as I hadn't been on a little bike since 1995 when I last raced a 125 in the schoolboys. I'll maybe get out again on the wee bike if the chance arises. Maybe best go on a diet for a month before I do, eh?

Heard a brilliant story from my dad tonight. He was telling me about his mate in the band who is very heavy and was ordered to diet by his doctor. He actually has to weigh himself by using two sets of scales – one for each foot – and adds them together. I thought that was hilarious when I heard it. Most scales only go up to 20 stone. I know that as I have another friend who claims he is always bang on 20 stone regardless of whether or not he appears fatter than his last weigh in. He could be 25 stone for all we know!

Right, I'm hungry now after thinking about grub.

Catch ya later...



dirtbikerider 19



© Shaun Fowler

BROWN SAUCE!

DEFENDING CHAMPS HIT THE HEIGHTS

Reigning champs Stuart Brown and Luke Peters got the defence of their Maxxis British Sidecarcross title off to an almost perfect start at a wet Canada Heights at the end of March. We say 'almost' because the #1 VMC 630cc Husaberg pairing kicked off the season with a second place finish before firing to two wins to end the day on top with 72 points.

Quickest in timed training, a first lap crash in the opening race in the reworked Orchard section of the famous Kent track left the Brown/Peters combo at the back. Lap after lap they battled through the pack but at the flag couldn't get close enough to make a move on Scott Wilkinson and David Keane.

The final two motos saw Brown and Peters hit the front early on and pull away for two uncontested wins with the only real moment of drama coming in the last race when they got crossed up in a rut over the big tabletop at the bottom of the track. Wilkinson and Keane backed up their opening race win with a couple of thirds for second overall from brothers Daniel and Joe Millard who carded 3-2-2.

The next big date on the UK sidecarcross scene is round two of the world championship which takes place on April 18 at the spectacular Langrish circuit in Hampshire. If you've never seen the world's best crews huck their outfits over the sort of jumps even top solo riders would think twice about we strongly advise you to check it out!

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SWORDY SICKENER!

SWORDY'S SUFFERING FROM EPSTEIN-BARR VIRUS WHICH HAS LEFT HIM FLAT-OUT – BUT NOT IN THE WAY HE WANTS...

Words by **Stephen Sword** Photo by **Sutty**

We decided to miss the Hawkstone International the weekend after Little Silver to concentrate on some testing. As it happened, I ended up getting sick and ended up being in bed most of the weekend so would not have been able to go anyway.

But we continued to test and made some improvements with various parts that week. I raced the Red Bull Pro Nationals at Foxhill to get in some more race time and it was a good chance to ride the track as we have a British there later in the year. I ended up second overall – my first podium of the year – but there's still work to be done and room for improvement.

I was looking forward to Mallory and eager to get a win on the board. Jodie, Ayrton and I loaded up the van and set off Saturday lunchtime – it's nearly two hours on a good run from my place so not too bad. The wellies were still in the van from Little Silver and much needed as it was muddy under foot when we arrived. Although I ended up second overall I was happy with my day and how I was riding. The first race I took the holeshot but went down in the first turn – I just pushed a little too hard on the brake going in – but came back to fifth by the finish. Race two I managed to get round the first turn upright, this time in third. I closed in on the leader but just came up short so second it was. Race three I gated crap, about 10th. But I came through well to second by the flag to take second overall on the day and move up to second in the championship.

The following weekend we had off which was a good thing for me as I was ill again. I've been struggling with getting ill since Christmas so booked myself into the doctor and had some blood tests done. I received some of the tests back the same day which showed I was lacking some vital vitamins but I had to wait two more days for the other results. They showed that I have Epstein-Barr which is a blood viral infection. You can have this for months so this would explain a lot of why I was getting ill all the time and why I'm always run down. I seem to always be tired – even if I have a good 10 hours sleep I struggle to wake up and feel demotivated to do anything. Then by eight in the evening I'm asleep in front of the TV. I just couldn't understand why until I got the results back.

Although it was a massive blow to hear I have EBV at the same time it was a relief as I couldn't work out what was wrong with me.

I decided to try to race the first GP and see how I would get on. Well what a bloody disaster! I got out the gate well considering I qualified crap but I just couldn't ride, my body physically could not do it. I had been doing all this training and getting my head in a strong place, I was really looking forward to moving into the 450 class and this is the crap that happens! No matter how much I wanted to do well I knew it was not going to happen. It's so intense as you give it everything all year and that's it, world championship over because of some bloody illness that you can't even see like a broken leg. When will my luck change?

But as Jodie says you make your own luck so from now until I can get on the bike I will still be doing everything in my power to train and mentally be so strong for my next GP. I will get good results this year at GPs – focusing on being consistent – and win the British as I am far from giving up on my MX championship dreams. It looks like I'm going to rest from riding for the next few weeks as that's the only way to recover and be 100 per cent healthy again. I'm so gutted and it's not the start to the season I wanted but, hey, what doesn't break you makes you stronger so they say!

On a lighter subject, it's Ayrton's birthday in the next few weeks. How fast has that gone? And, no, he's still not crawling. Jodie says that it's a standing joke at all the baby groups! I think he will just walk as that's what I did. For his birthday his nana has bought him an electric quad and he can do it by himself already – scary stuff! And it's a mission when you want to get him off it. He is majorly into bikes and will spend hours just sat on his toy ones. I've been banned from buying him any more as Jodie doesn't want him riding so I had to buy him golf clubs. However, he shows no interest in them – only in his bikes – so good luck to Jodie.

He is crazy and has no fear so it wouldn't surprise me if he rides. People say it's in his blood and I never used to agree but now I'm not so sure! I will be having headache tablets for his birthday as he's having a party with 15 other children at our house. Jodie is making everything herself and even taking lessons in cakes! It should be cool for him as he loves the attention – just like his mother!

Anyway, have a good month and wish me a speedy recovery.

Braaaaaaap #71

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JOSH COPPINS

EVERGREEN KIWI JOSH COPPINS HOPS INTO THE CONFESSIONAL BOOTH AND BARES HIS SOUL FOR THE DBR FAITHFUL...

Interview by JP O'Connell Photo by Suttly

Q: I'd read you were contesting the British championships – why did you change your mind?

Dave Roberts, Cirencester

A: "I didn't change my mind, I really wanted to do it but it just didn't work out. My contract with Aprilia is for the GPs and Italian championship and the last two Italians clashed with the first two British – at first I thought I would be able to do all three but then the British dates got brought forward..."

"There's more to it though. I tried to set a deal up to do it but the Aprilia factory weren't really keen and then the dealer I tried to set it up through fell through so as it sits right now I'll do a few rounds off my own back just because I want to."

Q: Do you feel that you still have some GP wins left in you?

Michael Barnes, IoM

A: "Yes I do but only one or two – everything will just have to click though! Me, the bike and the track. But it is possible."

Q: How different is the power delivery on your Aprilia compared to a single cylinder bike?

Alan Cartwright, Southport

A: "The twin is more like a two-stroke delivery only more power – I'm still learning to get the best out of the twin but I have to ride it like a 125!"

Q: After being robbed of the '07 world championship due to injury was it difficult to lift and motivate yourself again?

Dave Gaines, Bracknell

A: "At first, yes... Then I got better, then I picked up an injury just before GP1 of '08 and it was a bit of a battle because I kinda dropped my head a little. I wouldn't say I wasn't motivated, just more frustrated."

Q: If you, Ben and Cody could all make the Motocross des Nations fully fit do you think Team NZ could still be a podium threat?

Alex Bowker, South Shields

A: "Yes, for sure! I mean we have been on the box many times – Ernee, Namur, Matterley Basin. It's only been Ernee where we were all fit and in the last moto only RC beat me and BT. Lierop '04 stands out for me, we were leading after the first moto and that's a first for team NZ!"

Q: You've had some great battles with people like Stefan Everts, Mickael Pichon, Joel Smets, BT and Tom Church – is there one race that stands head and shoulders over the rest?

Thomas Church, Bath

A: "For sure Desertmartin '06. I was the only guy to beat Stefan that year which I remind him of when I see him! And I lapped up to third place – Ken De Dycker was third overall and I lapped him in the second moto! I don't think I've ever gone as fast again as I did that day."

Q: You've never shied away from banging bars with your team-mates – is it important to have the psychological edge over them?

James Woodham, Surrey

A: "Well I always want to win and my team-mate is the first guy I like to beat! I haven't meant for it to be like that but now you say it you're right – I think it is important to have the edge over him, I like to be #1 in the team. Who doesn't?"

Q: Having recently become a father like yourself, I've found that it puts a different perspective on things such as how much I'm willing to potentially injure myself! Has it changed your outlook on motocross at all?

Paul Stacey, Stamford

A: "Yes, it has changed my outlook but not how I thought it would... I thought I might not want to take the risks but that's not true, well, not at the moment anyway. To be honest I more than likely wouldn't be racing in Europe still if it wasn't for my daughter. I was starting to think more along the lines that I now have a family and need to provide for them and it would also be good for my daughter to spend more time with my partner Lisa's family so that's part of why I stayed..."

Q: Having spent years away from home pursuing your world championship dream do you still think it's attainable or have you resigned yourself to the likelihood that it won't happen for you?

Toby Hemmings, Welshpool

A: "No, I realise it's not going to happen and I'm cool with that – it was always my goal and that's what I worked for but I'm not too stressed about it. I gave it a good shot and won a lot of races on the way. Sure, I'm missing the trophy and the extra 300K but the championship doesn't make the man..."

Q: Do you think that when you finally retire it will be back to NZ or after 20 odd years have you finally got used to all the rain over here?

Darren Bell, Stevenage

A: "Man, that's a good question. Sometimes if you ask me I'd say no way, I'm outta here but I am getting used to it and I'd happily stay if the right job comes up after racing. It's true there's more opportunities over here and I have heaps of friends here so watch this space I guess. All my life I've built up this little nest back home but there's plenty of time to get back to that."

Q: What goals have you and Aprilia set for this season?

Simon Merit, Cheltenham

A: "I want to win a GP, I want three podiums, I want to win some British championship races and most of all I wanna have fun along the way. By the way I think I'll do the above too!"

Q: What's your opinion on the new man-made/TV friendly/hard standing paddock type of circuit vs the more old-school tracks?

Kelly Lampert, Martock

A: "Well, I like the man-made facilities but the racing is always better on the old tracks. All the new tracks seem to be the same style! It's 50/50 I guess but sometimes we need to put the racing first – if the racing is good the spectators will keep coming and it's win/win for everyone!"

Q: As you get older do you find the physical training side of things is getting more difficult to keep up with?

Wayne Moore, Exeter

A: "Yes and no. I have found that I am doing more efficient training because I now know what to do but it's true that I wake up a bit stiffer these days!"

Q: Having been on the circuit for so long is there a part of you that is now looking forward to being able to hit into doughnuts, barbecued snags, killer steaks and a few tinnies whenever you feel like it?

Noah Drummond, Weymouth

A: "Yeah, that will be good! I'll be honest with you though, I pretty much eat what I want these days but I don't drink in the season, or much at all really. In 2009 I had a special diet and I stuck to it, I got my body fat down to 7 per cent and looked like a mean, lean machine! But I felt s**t! I got tired and I wasn't happy so this year and all prior to '09 I eat what I want whenever I want – but I'm not a pig, I have always eaten decent food."

Q: What advice would you give a teenager who is hoping to make it as a professional motocross rider?

Steve Chase, Horsham

A: "Work hard, never give up and persevere..."

NEXT MONTH

ZACH OSBORNE >>

Bike It Cosworth Yamaha's US import Zach Osborne is waiting in the wings to answer your questions so fire off an email to us at dbrrprobe@googlemail.com

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DBR: Who would play you in a film of your life?

KW: "It would have to be someone who could play a circus ringmaster cause that's kinda what my life is like at the moment – it's like a travelling circus! It's chaotic with the family – I've got four kids and they can be a real handful! My life's a bit of a blur..."

TC: "If Prince Harry was an actor then I think it would have to be him."

DBR: What was the last lie you told and who was it to?

KW: "Probably at the dealer show last night when I was ever so slightly late. I told them that my plane was delayed which was a little white lie! In my defence it was something out of my control, it wasn't like I was chillin' with my friends – honest!"

TC: "Oh man, you're calling me out on these! I used to be a compulsive liar and compulsive liars quit knowing when they're lying cause they do it so much. I'm not one anymore – see, I just lied again right there!"

DBR: Could you check your own valve clearances?

KW: "Heck no, do we even need valves!"

TC: "I could definitely take stuff apart, I'm just not so sure I could get it back together! I tried to build a practice engine last year and quit after 45 minutes, it just didn't make any sense!"

DBR: You're in second and on the leader's rear wheel – do you take him out in the last corner for the win?

KW: "Of course, yep."

TC: "I'd most certainly do everything I possibly could to make sure I was the first to the chequered flag but I wouldn't put his life in danger."

DBR: What's your least favourite part of an SX track?

KW: "In the past it's always been the whoops but I'm doing good now, yet this year I've been getting horrible starts. I guess for me it's whatever part I'm struggling with and this season it's the starts."

TC: "Being mid-pack on the first lap after a bad start is pretty much one of the scariest things since Edward Scissorhands!"

DBR: Do you own a pair of pyjamas?

KW: "Yes I do, they're [New Orleans] Saints pyjamas. I guess the fact they won the Superbowl gives the PJs some credibility! I also have a robe I like to wear too!"

TC: "I wear sweats which I guess are technically pyjamas, although I'd have to say that they are on the next level up as regards coolness."

DBR: What's been the highlight of your career so far?

KW: "There's been so many. I think about the GP at Budds Creek, the des Nations that we won, the East/West shootout with RC when I was on a 125cc back in '97, my first win in Charlotte when I was a 125 rider and I won a 250cc Main. There's been so many but all of those are big for me, I'm very lucky."

TC: "Probably the '08 East Coast Lites Championship."

DBR: What car do you drive?

KW: "The car I own that I don't drive is a BMW 760 with a V12 engine – it's killer with only 6,000 miles on it!"

TC: "I have a Ford Econoline E350 passenger van."

DBR: And if money were no object?

KW: "Either a Ferrari F430 Spider or a Murcielago Lamborghini."

TC: "I would drive a van and it would be super-sweet. It would be a 2006 Ford Econoline E350 – wait, I'm already living the dream!"

DBR: If you could change anything about yourself what would it be?

KW: "I'd trim down my love handles a little bit – I'm 32 now and I just can't eat what I used to! Other than a little nip and tuck I'm pretty happy with my own skin."

TC: "I'd like to have better genetics because I'm wired to be fat! There is a fat person in here trying to get out."

DBR: If you could meet any person – alive or dead – who would it be?

KW: "It's someone I've met before but would like to reunite with and that's Drew Brees, the quarterback for the Saints. He's an MX fan and likes to ride and stuff."

TC: "Jesus Christ."

DBR: If you were shipwrecked on an island what three things would you want with you?

KW: "Hmmm, if I can count my family as one then obviously definitely them but after that I'm a pretty simple man. As long as I've a full belly and got my wife with me and stuff then what else is there really?"

TC: "Ice cream, probably a dog and a dirt bike."



mano o mano

GEICO GUYS!

THIS MONTH'S MEASURE OF MAN MAYO IS A SHOWDOWN BETWEEN GEICO HONDA HOMIES KEVIN WINDHAM AND TREY CANARD...

Interviews and photo by JP O'Connell

DBR: What's the most embarrassing thing you've done when drunk?

KW: "I guess from when I was young it would have been driving and wrecking cars!"

TC: "I've never been drunk. I once did a radio interview when I was straight out of wrist surgery and still messed due to the anaesthetic, apparently I came out with some crazy random stuff."

DBR: What's your most prized material possession?

KW: "It's the lake house that I own. I go there after every race weekend and hang out there for a day just to kind of destress from the weekend. I just love how peaceful it is there."

TC: "GEICO Powersports gave me a championship bike and if my house was burning down that's what I would grab."

DBR: Is winning a race better than sex?

KW: "Winning is pretty damn big so I think at this point I'd have to say winning the race – I've had sex a lot more times than I've won!"

TC: "Yes!"

DBR: One thing about your riding style you'd like to improve?

KW: (Laughing) "Well you know they say I have a phenomenal riding style and my whips are sick! Seriously, I'd like to be able to turn a little better, to execute the turn a little better – I've got a lot of leg and body parts I've got to find a place to put."

TC: "Probably the ability to hang it out a bit more. I do it but not as much as others sometimes."

DBR: What's your favourite film?

KW: "It's a Western called Tombstone – it's an oldie but I dig that one."

TC: "Winner Takes All."

DBR: What's your most annoying habit?

KW: "Everyone around me says I have ADD [Attention Deficit Disorder], I just can't keep focussed. I start a lot of things but don't tend to finish them."

TC: "I'm a neat freak – when people are messy I kind of freak out a little bit."

DBR: If the opportunity arose would you like to try a season of GPs?

KW: "No. No disrespect to the GPs as I'm a fan, it's just that at this point in my life I don't think it would be easy to uproot myself and leave my family."

TC: "Yeah. Obviously my priorities are here in the States but if things happened that way then sure. The people over there really care about it, over here it's a bit more like a party, a big social event. It's always been a dream of mine to race in the des Nations so hopefully I can have that experience some day."

DBR: What's been the worst MX-related decision you've made during your career?

KW: "I think it's when I left Yamaha for Honda back in '98. Not so much the move but the way it ended up going down with lawsuits and stuff."

TC: "I've been pretty happy with most of my decisions but I'd have to say it was riding the West Coast Lites last year. I was fresh off of injury and I don't think I was where I needed to be."

DBR: Something about yourself that nobody else knows?

KW: "Between the races I'm just an old country boy, on the farm with my dad pretty much every day – working cows, baling hay, tagging calves and everything else that goes on at an operational farm."

TC: "I always listen to weird music before I race – hate to admit this but I listened to Miley Cyrus on the line at Anaheim 1!"

1ST RACE VICTORY

KTM starts 2010 with a bang!

Tony Cairoli showed what he and the new 350 SX-F are made of at the Starcross in Mantova with 2 race wins and the overall MX1 victory.

Shaun Simpson and Marvin Musquin wrapped up a near perfect weekend on their 250 SX-F's with a 1-2 in MX2. From the first holeshot – "Ready to Race"

The motorcycle illustrated in this advertisement is not suitable for use on the road. Do not emulate the riding scenarios and always wear protective clothing!

www.ktm.com

Photo: M. Lohr





Martin Barr and Graeme Irwin both rode injured at Mallory – although Marty's facial injury isn't as bad as this pic suggests!

PLUCK OF THE IRISH!

MOTHER NATURE DOES HER WORST FOR THE ULSTER PREMIER OPENER – GOOD JOB THEY BRED THEM TOUGH IN THE EMERALD ISLE...

Words by **Stevie Mills** Photo by **Sutty**

Downpatrick was the venue to launch the 2010 Ulster Premier Championship series and adding to the anticipation and excitement of the new season was the knowledge that Ulster's #1 son of motocross would be plying his trade on home soil.

And the Crock Star didn't disappoint, serving up a fantastic display of just how to race in possibly the toughest conditions I have witnessed in many a year. On a positive note, the track had been ploughed and well prepared the week prior to the event although Mother Nature – still in rain mode – made a mockery of both organisers and riders alike as near on every rider ate mud at some point of the day. Many of the Grade C men cleaned their distinctly second-hand looking machines and decided that being a spectator for the day made way more sense than collecting 10kg of mud every lap.

While the legacy of round one will surely be one of burnt-out clutches and bruised egos the fact remains that motocross is our chosen sport and, for our sins, we live in Ireland.

GC clocked up the overall win, regrouping from an early collision with defending champ Wayne Garrett. The first lap collision temporarily dropped GC off the leaderboard but more permanently snapped Wayne's back brake! Second place on the podium with two runner up finishes was TM-mounted Stuart Edmonds who blitzed the opening laps of the first race, although he seemed to run out of steam towards half-distance.

Thomas Merton on a Norman Watt Kawasaki showed both patience and experience as the former Ulster champ negotiated every rutty corner with all the finesse of a surgeon. In years gone by Tommy would have pushed until he crashed out and if Tommy sticks to the game plan he won't be far away.

Garrett limped his TSR KTM home in the first outing and came on strong with a third in the final race of the day – not what he was looking for but it was a better result than most of the early season favourites collected. A very credible performance from Robert Hamilton aboard his G&G Ross Yamaha leaves him fifth in the points table. Hammy looked lean, mean and ready to reclaim his place as a front-runner on the Irish MX scene.

In a brutal reminder of just how tough and fickle the world of pro motocross can be, Graeme Irwin's first ever British championship win at the opening round quickly faded into a moment in history. It was painfully obvious at Mallory for round two of the Maxxis series that all was not well with the HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK teamster as he struggled home in 13th overall. "I've got to go for the shoulder operation – I can't hold on to the handlebars," admitted Graeme. Disappointing as it must be for the youngster we should see him back in the saddle come July – good luck and speedy recovery mate.

Another rider on the injured list is PAR Honda rider Martin Barr who by all accounts should not have been able to race, never mind post a scorecard that keeps his title hopes alive.

Racing with fresh stitches in his face following an operation the previous week again demonstrates the courage and dedication that drives these athletes on.

Although carding a DNF in the first moto, Edward Allingham still managed enough points for 17th overall on the day. If Ed can get out of the gate he will find running at the front a lot easier than trying to come through a field of this calibre.

In the star-studded MX1 class GC served notice that he's far from finished with racing at

the sharp end of the pack. Looking so smooth and relaxed, the PBM Kawasaki rider tailed the CAS Honda GP team riders home in the first moto as he rode to a fine fourth place finish. A solid sixth overall on the day, beating the defending champ in the process, GC will continue to build his confidence as the season progresses – it's a long way to go and I fully expect a few more surprises from the Crock Star.

And what great news! GC will ride all the Ulster Open Championship events and as many Irish rounds as his UK commitments will allow.

Mallory didn't prove too fruitful for the other Irish MX1 men. Garrett was not looking at home on the deeply rutted and demanding circuit. Wayne, who was ousted from a scoring position in the final laps of race one, was unable to get himself into the points all day while Edmonds was rewarded with three points for his day's efforts.

Natalie Kane joined the ranks of the MX2 class and held her own against some of the fastest riders in Europe, narrowly missing out on scoring points in the first race with a 22nd. This is the sort of training that will help Natalie in her quest for GP success – well done that girl!

Dave Gorman's efforts were rewarded at round one of the Southern Centre Championship which took place at the aptly named Gormanstown track on Sunday. Two wins and a third place for the AJ Elite Bathrooms rider was enough to secure the points lead and the 400 Euros prize fund – I would think that the Southern Centre Championship will attract a lot more interest from many Ulster Centre racers for the rest of the season. Filling out the podium was Michael Mahoon and Aaron Beausang.

See you at the races...

Stevie
dirtbikerider 27



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DBR: What do you think about Turkey?
Knighter: "It goes reet well with gravy!"

NEW HORIZONS!

A NEW NAME, A NEW RACE IN TURKEY AND A NEW CLASS FOR RIDERS WHO PREFER TO WEE SITTING DOWN ARE JUST SOME OF THE DELIGHTS TO BE ENJOYED BY THE ENDURO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP THIS YEAR...

Words and photo by Jonty Edmunds

For 2010 the World Enduro Championship becomes – drum roll please – the Enduro World Championship. That's right, the word 'enduro' now precedes the word 'world' while the word 'championship' still holds firm and maintains its time-honoured position as the last of the three words. To give the series its full title it's now to be known as the Maxxis FIM Enduro World Championship.

So what? Well, the change is to bring enduro in line with other FIM-governed motorcycle disciplines which are discipline first, world championship second. That's it. Oh, there's a snazzy new logo too.

It probably would have made more sense to introduce the Enduro World Championship as it's to be known forever more when ABC Communications took over the promotion of the series five or six years ago but that never happened. What would also have made more sense, while things are getting changed around, would have been to think about the class structure used by the championship and possibly give that a little overhaul as well.

If bringing things in line is important to the powers that be why does the EWC's Enduro 1 class feature 250F machines while the MXGP series has 450s in MX1? Not a lot of continuity is there? But that's by the by, what should have been looked at is the existing class structure. Some, like the Enduro Junior class, clearly work very well indeed with the EJ division the series' most popular category. By contrast the Enduro 3 class, the big bike category, isn't working as it should. With as little as a dozen riders entering into the class on occasion last year wouldn't it have made sense to have reworked the class

somehow – maybe a snazzy new name – in the hope of attracting more riders?

And what about the Enduro GP class, the long talked about 'elite league' in which each manufacturer puts forward one or two riders to do battle in the champions of champions class? Seems we're going to have to wait a little longer to find out if Enduro GP ever becomes a reality.

As well as having a new championship title the EWC welcomes female competitors for 2010 and gives them their own class. No longer will female riders have to slog it out best they can in either the E1, E2 or E3 classes. From this year forwards they will compete against one another in their own class.

Encouraging women to compete in the EWC is great but there is a problem. Anyone who went to Portugal to watch last year's ISDE will know Frenchwoman Ludivine Puy will win the class hands down. Leagues ahead of all other female riders that have so far tried their hand in either the world championship or six days, Lulu's participation ensures that we already know who will be winning one of this year's EWC titles.

What most teams and riders know about the GP of Turkey – the EWC's all-new event for 2010 – can be written on the back of a cigarette packet. Those who have visited the country on holiday will have more of an idea what to expect but generally no-one has any idea what is in store for them when the EWC heads further east than ever before.

And that's one of the great things about having a totally new event as a round of the 2010 EWC series. The smart money says that conditions probably won't be all that different to those at the GP of Greece – mostly dry, mostly

rocky – but the exact nature of the course and its special tests is unknown. Returning to countries and locations already visited in past seasons – so as to build familiarity into a championship – makes perfect sense but throwing in the occasional unknown is also necessary. Part of being an enduro champion is, after all, mastering unfamiliar terrain.

The reason the series is visiting Turkey, aside from expanding into new countries, is linked directly to cost saving. Instead of teams travelling to Greece for a one-off event, so the theory goes, they can now kill two birds with one stone and participate in a second not too far away event before returning home.

While Youthstream took the MXGP series to Turkey in order to relieve the nation of a not insignificant amount of cash, the EWC intentions are linked much closer to doing what is right for the teams participating in the championship. The driving force behind the event is the Serres MC which organises the GP of Greece. What that ensures is that organisational experience is mixed with fresh terrain. Taking a series of any kind to pastures new isn't without risks but by employing the services of those that know what is expected certainly limits those risks.

With its seaside base the event will likely be very different to all other rounds of this year's championship. It will no doubt be slightly shambolic – sheep wandering through fields where special tests are marked out, helmetless spectators racing from test to test on unlicensed MX bikes, that kind of thing – but providing all important bases are covered it should be a great addition to the series. If nothing else it'll certainly be an interesting event...



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WIN! WIN! WIN!

SEARLE'S SIGNED A1 NO FEAR GEAR UP FOR GRABS

He's the British hero living the American dream and we've got Tommy Searle's actual No Fear race kit up for grabs this month – yep, that's right, the very same jeans and jersey he wore on his way to seventh place in his AMA SX debut at Anaheim 1.

And to be in with a shout of winning Searle's superb signed swag all you have to do is tell us the Factory FMF/KTM/Motorex/Dunlop rider's nickname.

- Is it:
- A) *Tommy Knocker*
 - B) *Tommy Rocket*
 - C) *Tommy Gun*
 - D) *Tom The Bomb*

Once you've decided on your answer hook up to www.dirtbikerider.com where you need to follow the competition link, type in your answer, fill out the fields and hit transmit. The comp closes at noon on **May 13** with the first correct entry chosen totally at random getting the jersey and jeans.



[15] TOMMY SEARLE



01 THOR RACING GRID LIMITED EDITION RACEWEAR

The second instalment of THOR's Spring Limited Editions – Grid – which was recently debuted to victory by Ryan Villopoto at the Daytona Beach SX is now available right here in the UK but be quick because it's only about in strictly limited quantities. Built to perform and last like THOR's Core range always is and rarer than rocking horse s**t, the good news is there's no premium on the price which in my mind makes it bargainicious...

Price: Jersey £44.99 Pants £139.99 Gloves £29.99

Supplier: madison.co.uk

Contact: 0870 034 7226



02 XTRIG TRIPLE CLAMPS

If there were Oscars for engineering you could pretty much guarantee that the good guys at XTRIG would have a whole heap of awards as everything they manufacture is just so damn good. Take these triple clamps for example – they're super-strong, multi-adjustable and with their now almost trademark orange-gold anodized finish look the absolute b*****s as well!

Price: £499.95

Supplier: racefx.co.uk

Contact: 0845 450 1448



03 SPY OPTIC KLUTCH MX GOGGLE

Coming complete with a spare lens and goggle bag these Jason Lawrence signature Klutch MX goggles are pretty badass peeper protectors that are aggressively designed to offer unmatched peripheral vision and are awesomely ventilated too so there'll be no steaming up no matter how hot n' fired up you get.

Price: £45

Supplier: mxnofeareurope.com

Contact: 0289 092 3348



04 DIRTY DEVIL MOTORCYCLE CLEANING PRODUCT

Dirty Devil is an all-new concentrated cleaning product that's the dog's danglies when it comes to removing dirt, sand, grease and stubborn stains from your off-road weapon and it's also suitable for wanging in your washing machine with all your dirty kit too. Dirty Devil is guaranteed not to attack aluminium or anodised parts and is safe on all plastics, rubbers and paintwork too.

Price: £5.70

Supplier: twsgb.co.uk

Contact: Alex Rach 07855 530480



05 ARTRAX PERFORMANCE BRAKE PADS

Riding in sand and mud can wear out your brake pads like nobody's business and replacing those worn parts on a regular basis soon becomes a pretty expensive hobby which is why these sub-£10 stoppers from Artrax could be just the thing for the weekend warrior on a tight budget.

Price: £9.99

Supplier: apico.co.uk

Contact: 01282 473190



06 ARTRAX UNIVERSAL HANDLEBAR CLAMP KIT

A little adjustability in the height of your bike's handlebars can go a long way towards making your race machine much more comfortable and enjoyable to ride and that makes this cheap-as-chips universal clamp kit well worth a punt on to see if you can find your perfect set-up.

Price: £23.99

Supplier: apico.co.uk

Contact: 01282 473190

07 METAL MULISHA ROCKSTAR ENERGY TEES

Right now Rockstar Energy and Metal Mulisha are two of the hottest and most hardcore brands around so it's little surprise that the two have teamed up to create an awesome line of clothing that includes this pair of awesome t-shirts – the Transition (white) and Gnar Star (black). The whole range of Metal Mulisha/Rockstar Energy casual clothing as worn by The Bear is now available in the UK thanks to Brizzle badasses Freestyle Xtreme who exclusively import the lot so check it all out online at www.freestylextreme.com today...

Price: £21.99

Supplier: freestylextreme.com

Contact: 0117 967 2240

08 FOX RACING

360 RACEWEAR

Available in a range of good old-fashioned solid colours – blue, orange, bright red and black – Fox's 360 range of racewear continues to lead the way in terms of design, fit and construction. With more new features for 2010 than you can shake a stick at it's well worth checking out the whole range online at www.foxeurope.com

Price: Pants £130 Jersey £38 Glove £28

Supplier: foxeurope.com

Contact: 0191 487 6100

09 SCORPION EXO

VX-17 AIR HELMET

Scorpion are a fairly new helmet brand to the UK market even though they've been around Stateside for a year or two now where they've rapidly become known as a company that likes to push the limits of design and function. A good example of their cutting edge design is this VX-17 Air helmet that features inflatable cheek pads for a snug, custom fit. Available in a range of different colours with various graphics options, Scorpion's VX-17 is another skid lid worth checking out when it's time to replace your MX headwear.

Price: £229

Supplier: scorpionsports.eu

Contact: 01923 772273

10 SPY OPTIC

CLASH SUNGLASSES

You can tell when summer's nearly here because our Tech Ed Godfrey Wacker will put off doing his column and concentrate on blagging a new pair of sunnies to protect his ickle eyes from the sun's damaging rays instead. This year's sunglasses of choice are these totally terrific Spy Optic Clash jobbies that are totally blinging as well as being totally protective against 100 per cent of those totally nasty UV rays – we hear Geoff's totally pumped!

Price: £75

Supplier: chainreactioncycles.com

Contact: 0289 335 2976

11 N-STYLE

REPLICA GRAPHICS KITS

If you need to bling up your bike you could do a lot worse than check out the latest range of team graphics kits from N-Style like these Pro Circuit Monster Kawasaki, Troy Lee Designs Honda and Joe Gibbs Racing Yamaha. Check out the full range online at www.n-style.com

Price: Pro Circuit graphics £99 Pro Circuit seat cover £40

TLD and JGR full kit £125

Supplier: docwob.com

Contact: 07968 800062

12 HAYNES

OFF-ROAD BIKE WORKSHOP MANUALS

Haynes manuals have long been the book of choice for anoraks who like nowt better than tinkering with their motorcars on a weekend. Renowned for their easy-to-follow, step-by-step workshop guides the good folk at Haynes have now done the dirt bike community a massive favour by writing a series of similarly simple to swallow tech-tips and how-tos for scramble bike spanner-swingers. Bikes covered by the books so far include Yamaha PW, TTR, YZ, YZF and WR models, the Honda CR, CRF, CRF-X and XR ranges as well as KTM's SX and EXC four-poppers. Unfortunately Suzuki/Kawazuki owners need to keep on watching this space!

Price: from £16.99

Supplier: apico.co.uk

Contact: 01282 473190

13 ANSWER RACING

SYNCRON RACEWEAR

Coming in six separate colour ways – blue, red, black, orange, white or green – there's a set of Answer Syncron racewear to suit almost everyone no matter what their tastes and with a full set costing less than an 'undred quid – that's for jersey, pants and gloves – it should suit all pockets an all.

Price: Adult set £99.99 Youth set £79.99

Supplier: apico.co.uk

Contact: 01282 473190



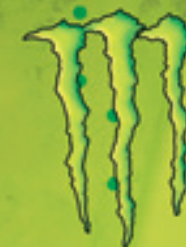


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MONSTER HUNT!



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WE'RE ON THE LOOK-OUT FOR A NEW **MONSTER ENERGY** GRID GIRL — AND WE WANT YOU TO HELP FIND HER FOR US...

Welcome to the third and final month of our quest to find a Monster Energy grid girl to represent DBR at a major 2010 event and in an exclusive Monster Girl photoshoot!

Monster Girls are wild, boisterous, exciting, rebellious and scandalous, Monster Girls are not just a pretty face but an attitude, changing their fashion, hair, make-up, speech and whole lifestyle to live the Monster brand to its fullest. They dance, they drink, they party till dawn, they can't be held back or controlled, Monster Girls are admired, adored and not to be messed with. In short, Monster Girls rock our socks off!

The deal's dead simple. Monster Energy want DBR readers to find a luscious lady to work for them at a major event in 2010 and feature in a professional photoshoot.

So how about it? Do you know someone who fits the bill? Is your other half a honey? Your sister scorchio? Maybe you have a drop-dead gorgeous gal-pal? Does the lady in the block of flats opposite look a beauty through binoculars? Or if you're one of our foxy female readers — such as the utterly lovely Lydia pictured right who entered last month — you could even fit the bill yourself...

The competition kicked off in March's DBR, continued in our April issue and signs off in May so you've still got time to pop your piccies in the post, email them to us or fire them across via text.

To submit your entry you can either email pics to us at anthony.sutton@dirtbikerider.co.uk or by post to 'Monster Hunt', DBR, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe LA4 4AG. If you're in a hurry you can even text a pic across to 07786 200546 — just write DBRMG in the text box followed by your name and where you live*. Entries must have the permission of the lady in question plus her name, address and her daytime contact number. Please note, all candidates must be 18 or over...

Entries close on **April 30**.

*All replied messages cost £1 plus standard network charge. By supplying your telephone number you're happy to receive SMS/MMS messages from Johnston Press and its approved business partners. Johnston Press (or via its agents) and its business partners may contact you about new promotions, products and services. Please add the word STOP at the end of your message if you do not wish to receive these. For quality and training purposes we may monitor communications. SMS/MMS service is provided by g8wave London N7.





ROLE MODELS!

I feel justified to write following a superb weekend racing with our three young sons at East Cumbria's Brampton venue. Being happy just to get going again after the recent bad weather, we arrived at the venue to find that the people behind the scenes had clearly worked their socks off to ensure a good meeting.

Then when we found ourselves rubbing shoulders with some of the top UK riders – both adult and youth – who were supporting this local event my kids were thrilled. Even after signing my 'team' in and parting with some readies for the privilege I managed a smile myself.

A superb day of racing added to our memories but when my son found himself eating sand and struggling to drag himself from under his machine, imagine his face when he found none other than British champ Brad Anderson and Martin Barr helping him up. After a dusting down and some words of encouragement off he went again.

He crossed the line almost last but with the biggest smile on his face. And guess what he talked about all the way home with his brothers?

In a time of egos and vast sums of money dominating our sporting media, how fabulous that personalities from 'our' sport at the top of their game turn up to support local events and take the time not only to mix and chat in the paddock but also get mucked in too.

I always knew what a great sport this is but now even the wife agrees. A big thanks to Brad and Martin – you are truly role models the sport should be proud of. Guess who we will all be shouting for in 2010?

Dave, Durham

There's no doubt we're lucky to have such down to earth stars in motocross and it sounds like your lad went down to earth in front of a couple of the most, er, down to earth of the lot of them! Now you've got a fight on your hands to decide which one of your boys gets this month's star prize – unless you play safe and keep the Etnies yourself...

WHERE'S WOODY?

I thought I would write in after seeing the disappointing news that Shaun Simpson is not riding the British series this year – what with Billy MacKenzie missing as well it does concern me that the series is losing its importance.

I have ridden or spectated at MX since I was a child in the mid '60s and only missed about three British MX GPs in that time and have been to at least 60 per cent of the British championship rounds. I pay to see the best riders competing for a serious championship at the best tracks – it cannot be good for the series (the birthplace of MX) or up and coming riders in the UK if some of our best riders do not compete here.

I understand that the top riders have commitments to the world series (Youthstream do not care about Brit MX) and the convenience of bases in Europe etc but they should also have a commitment to UK MX and fans in the UK. After all, it's where they started. We go on about crowds getting smaller but the majority of paying spectators want to see the best riders in action and I suspect that if the top five riders from each class last year decided not to race the series this year crowds would plummet even further and clubs would not be prepared or be able to afford to take the risk.

I don't recall three-time world champion Dave Thorpe – arguably the best British rider ever – missing the series other than with injury! Or ex world champs Graham Noyce and Neil Hudson for that matter.

Eddie, via email

Thanks for your letter Eddie – you raise some good points. Shaun's decision to race selected Maxxis rounds instead of the full series is based on the relevance of the locations to him – for example the Foxhill round on July 25 is followed the weekend after by a GP at Lommel and for someone whose main focus is the world title he needs to riding on a similar surface to the next GP. But while we can't fault his reasoning you're right that losing a talent like Shaun is a blow to race promoters and fans. On the plus side there are more and more lucrative domestic races that are helping to keep our top riders busy in Britain rather than at the GPs.

COST EFFECTIVE!

I have been into motocross for the past 15 years but have only taken the plunge and got myself an MX bike over the last year. I am now totally hooked on the sport and would love to see it go more mainstream.

I feel that the Red Bull Pro Nationals are going to go quite a way to doing that. Why? Well the price is £12 per adult. This in my opinion is a great appeal to people who are just looking for a

day out. I went to Weston last year on the Sunday – tickets were £20 each. I also looked at going to watch supercross in Liverpool and that was £30 a ticket. I pre-booked my tickets for round one at Foxhill and best of all don't feel ripped off. I will be going to as many Red Bull Pro Nationals as possible and I hope that families who may not know anything about the sport decide to go along for the £12 ticket price.

This I feel can only help the sport and help change the 'popular' negative view that some outsiders have.

Keep up the good work, rant over...

James, Bridgend

There's a lot to be said for looking for more bang for your buck in the present financial climate...

FAN MAIL

Hey guys at DBR, this is the first time I've written in to a magazine so I just want to keep it simple. I've been collecting your magazine for the past eight months, mainly because it covers the British motocross which I love.

There are very excellent pictures of motocross events which makes me want to ride my 1999 Kawasaki KX100 which I can't at the moment because I need a trailer! If you would be so kind to publish this letter in your next magazine please? Thanks DBR!

Shane, Essex

Happy to oblige mate...

A BOOKING DISGRACE!

Can anybody tell me what in the name of god is going on with the British Grand Prix this year?

First it's going to be at a new 'super venue' at Newport, then we hear this new 'super venue' isn't going to be ready on time and Gareth Hockey is moving it to a new track at Chepstow, now it looks like it's either not happening at all or will be run by Youthstream and the ACU at a third yet to be announced venue on a new yet to be announced date.

I'd actually booked myself into a hotel near Newport but luckily have been able to cancel and it's not cost me a penny but it's no thanks to the shambolic organisation – the information coming from RHL Activities has been unreliable to the point of being useless. My nan could have done a better job and she's been dead for three years!

Richard, Oxford

If it makes you feel any better you're not the only one frustrated by the whole 'will it, won't it' vibe surrounding this year's British GP – but the good news is there's DEFINITELY going to be a round in the UK this year. A date and venue haven't been finalised just yet but as soon as they are we'll let you know...



GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

WELL HERE'S WHERE YOU SHOULD BE SAYING IT...

Write to Rant at the usual address or email us at rant@dirtbikerider.co.uk. All letters/emails must be accompanied by a full address. Oh and please don't send emails all in capitals. Cheers!

LETTERS WIN PRIZES

Write to Rant, get your letter published and you'll win a one-litre trigger bottle of marvellous bike cleaning fluid Muc-Off. And if we rate your letter highly enough you'll also receive our star prize – this month a pair of Etnies Odssey shoes.





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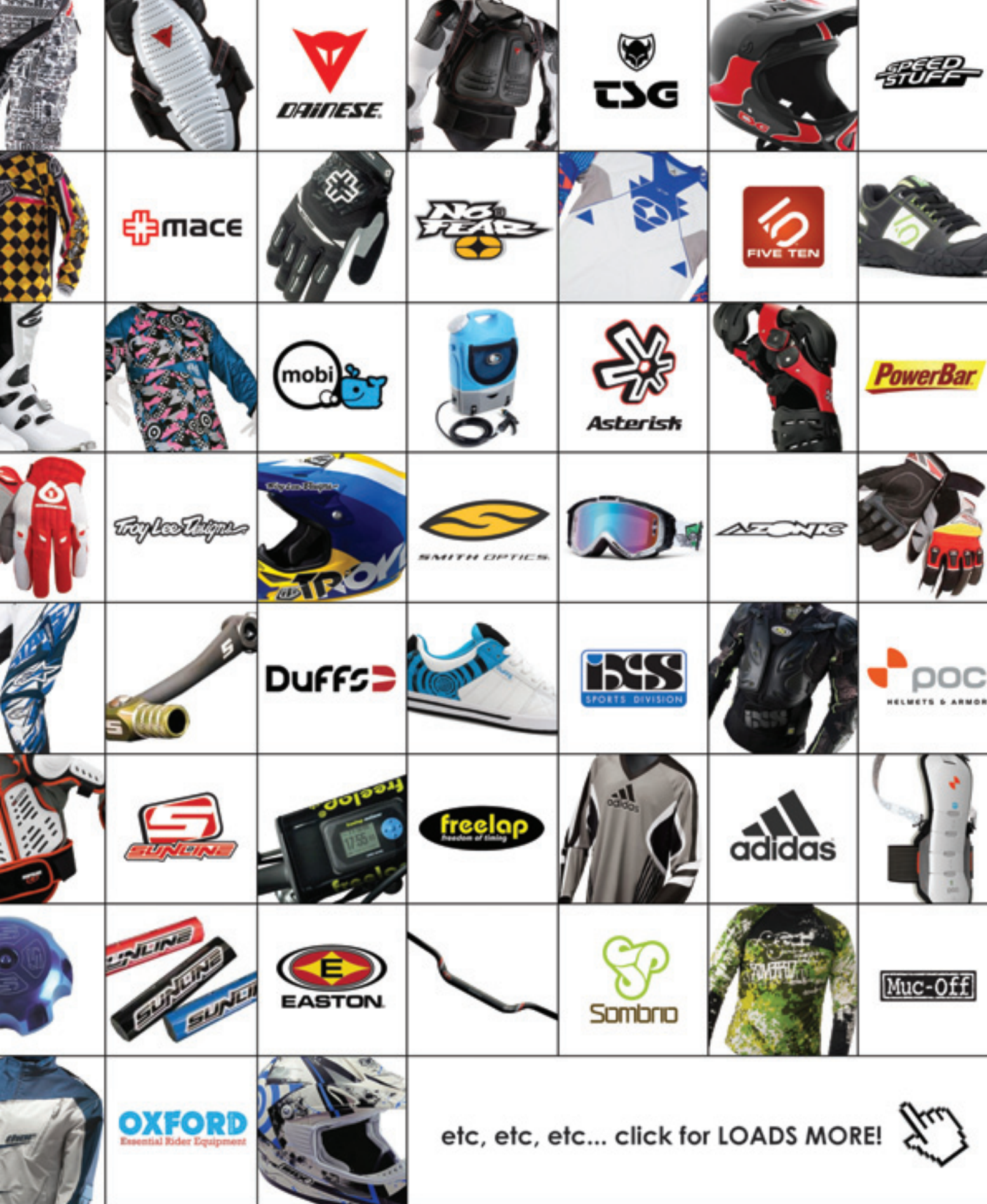


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EASTERN PROMISES!

KICKING OFF IN THE FORMER EASTERN BLOC, THE FIRST ROUND OF THE 2010 MOTOCROSS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP LIVES UP TO THE HYPE AND DELIVERS AN AWESOME WEEKEND OF BULGARIAN BAR BANGIN'...

Words and photos by **Sutty**

**Father Matei
Preobrazhenski –
Bulgarian MX2 champ
in 1952 – clutches his
copy of DBR**



The opening grand prix of the year is always something a little bit special – there's a genuine air of excitement as nobody really knows just who's gonna come out swinging and take home the silverware.

Of course, there are always favourites and the pre-season shakedowns have given us some indication of who's hot and who's not but there's only one time when all the scores are even and that's when the gate drops for the first moto of the year.

There are some important changes to this year's series – the biggest being in the lowest displacement division where for the first time in the history of the FIM world championship the MX2 class is now purely for riders under 23 years of age. MX2 has always traditionally been the class of choice for younger up and coming riders and so only a handful of older guys have been forced to move up out of it – Rui Goncalves, Davide Guarneri, Manuel Monni and

Anthony Boissiere are four contenders from last year's series who've aged out – which now leaves us with a class full of hungry young out and out racers all gunning for glory in MX2 and the true elite up there in the premier MX1 class.

And that too sees some change for the first time in a while as although the rules have always allowed it, nobody's ridden anything but 450cc four-strokes for the last few seasons. 2010 will in fact see three different sizes of engine being raced and all by one single manufacturer – KTM – while the rest stick with what they know works.

The Austrian marque have always offered a huge choice of race-ready machinery and they've now added a revolutionary 350cc model to their range. This new machine will be ridden in anger by Antonio Cairoli, Goncalves (when he returns from injury) and Austria's Matthias Walkner. KTM also have Max Nagl racing his familiar factory 450F while their factory-supported German team Sarholz have got Cedric Soubeyras riding a 250cc

two-stroke – it's been a while since we've seen one of those in the MX world championships.

The venue for the opening round is a little bit special too. Sevlievo has to be one of the most spectacular motocross circuits in the world and thanks to some financial input from the Bulgarian government has some of the best facilities too. As a nation Bulgaria has come a long way in the last few years and like many of the former Eastern Bloc countries has a can-do attitude that fits perfectly with Youthstream's vision for creating the best motocross championship in the world.

The one bad thing about having the opening round in Bulgaria is the relatively small crowd on hand to enjoy the spectacular racing. But with free live footage of the race available to absolutely everyone in the world who's wired up to the internet nobody has to miss a thing and if they have then what the hell – they can catch up with all the important stuff over the next 14 pages...



ORANGE CRASH!

IT'S A 1-2 FOR KTM IN MX1 AS NAGL AND CAIROLI TRADE MOTO WINS...

The press room conspiracy theorists are having a field day when they notice that the start straight in Sevlievo is packed flat and bladed rather than dug deep and rotoverted like in previous years. "I wonder if that's a Youthstream directive to ensure Cairoli doesn't get buried too deep in the pack off the start?" asks one media member to everybody and nobody in particular. Nobody knows the answer or at least nobody is willing to say.

"I don't think it will matter so much," claims Tony when I ask him if he thinks it will help him get the 350 off the startline. "If you look at the pre-season race at Mantova which was really soft I got some great starts so to me it doesn't matter if they rotoverted them or not."

And to a certain degree Tony C's bang on because with Max Nagl on pole there isn't much chance of anyone else grabbing a holeshot on race day. The 22-year-old German is a notoriously good starter and armed with one of the fastest bikes in the MX1 division more or less gets out in front in almost every race he enters. Here in Sevlievo the story is no different.

It's actually Aprilia's Josh Coppins who gets to turn one first in the day's opening moto but it's Nagl who turns tighter and gets his nose out front down the second straight. Smelling victory the Bavarian brawler does what he does best and roars to victory in a race that sees little in the way of passing. In fact after the first lap is over the top three stays the same with Nagl

heading home 2008 world champion David Philippaerts and Teka Suzuki's Clement Desalle who beats Ken De Dycker and Cairoli across the line.

The reigning champ's race is kind of what we've kind of come to expect from the 24-year-old Italian. I say kind of because while we're used to seeing Cairoli start about 10th and work his way forward a fifth place finish is under par for the rider who averaged a 19.3 points score per moto – that's fourth or better – in last year's series.

The second moto starts in a similar fashion with another holeshot for Nagl while DP19 gets away second once more. This time though Cairoli's right up there in third, Desalle's

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Swanie struggles to get in the groove



PRINCE'S POSSE!

IT'S A TOUGH DAY AT THE OFFICE FOR SWANIE AND BOBRYSHEV...

After a pretty stellar start to the season back home, CAS Honda teamsters Gareth Swanepoel and Evgeny Bobryshev are fully fired up for a great year in the GPs too but the season doesn't start too well for either rider.

It's particularly bad for Bobryshev who only gets 30 seconds into the first moto before he's done for the race. "The first race was over quickly for me – I only made it halfway around the lap before I had a little bit of contact with Monni and got pushed into the green fencing which then wrapped around my rear wheel so I couldn't go any further.

"The track had changed a lot before the second race and I found it hard to find a rhythm at first but it was going well until after about 25 minutes I started getting armpump – after that I lost a lot of places and ended up finishing 15th."

By comparison Swanie has a much better time of it although the 25-year-old South African knows he can do much better. "I got a semi good start in moto one and rode well in the first few laps but I stiffened up in the middle part of the race and lost a few positions before getting back into it a little bit and coming through strong at the end.

"In the second race I got a better start but tangled up with someone in the first corner and it basically just stopped me so I was way at the back of the pack. I managed to put my head down and charge through and I made some really good passes. I'm a bit disappointed with the place I finished in but very happy with the way I rode and the performance of the bike. It took me all weekend to get loose but I finally got there in the end."

When the overall scores are tallied up for the day Swanie sits 12th in the MX1 series standings while Evgeny has to be content with 17th following his no score in race one.



It's first blood to Max Nagl – the German goes 1-2 to take the MX1 series leader's red plate



Above: MX1 opening moto and Josh Coppins gets the V-twin Aprilia to the first corner with his nose in front

Right: Tanel Leok scores points in both motos – even with a concussion caused by a flying hay bale



**Clement Desalle leads
Antonio Cairoli and
David Philippaerts**



NEW KID ON THE BLOCK!

CATCHING UP WITH MARTIN HONDA'S JIMMY ALBERTSON

If there's one place in the GP pits that everyone can guarantee receiving a warm welcome it's in the Martin Honda camp where Lorenzo Resta and his team go all-out to ensure that absolutely everybody is comfortable and looked after. That warm welcome is extended to the media, fans, friends, sponsors and of course their riders too of which they have two brand-new ones for 2010.

Representing the Italian-based factory Honda squad this year are US import Jimmy Albertson and young gun Alessandro Battig, both making their GP debuts in Sevlievo. It's not the best start to the season for either with development rider Battig failing to score in either moto while Albee at least puts six points on the board to end the day in 19th position overall.

"There is one word I would use to describe my riding in both races today and that word is terrible," says the affable 22-year-old. "I am really enjoying my time in Europe so far and the track today was awesome – it had so many lines and it got really rough.

"The competition is really stiff over here too. You know there are 20 really fast guys out there and they never give up – they battle the whole time. The European scene is definitely strong. I'm new over here and this is my first race and, yeah, it's a learning experience but still it's not been a very good day. I know that if I ride to my full potential I can do a lot better. I'm really looking forward to the next round so I can show everyone what I can do."

AND PRIX BULGARIE



BEST OF BRITISH!

SWORD SUFFERS BUT AT LEAST TC TAKES MX1 POINTS

It's normally considered a beautiful thing when two becomes one but when we're talking about the number of British racers in the MX1 class it's anything but. With an already depleted stock of 450 riders in the world championship the last thing the British nation needs is one to drop out midway through the opening moto of the year but that's exactly what happens when Buildbase CCM's Stephen Sword parks his CMX450 in pit lane just seven laps into the new season.

"I'm ill – I've got Epstein-Barr," explains Swordy later. "I've actually known for a few weeks now – I've had some blood tests and I knew I'd be struggling before I even got here but I just had to give it a go. I've got to treat it like an injury and stop riding for a while because I've basically got no energy."

With Swordy sidelined for the foreseeable it's up to team-mate Tom Church to fly the flag for the CCM team and Blighty. The normally fast-starting Wiltshireman gets way too much grip off the gate in moto one and loses time and drive as the front wheel lifts. Rounding turn one in a less than promising position he doesn't stay stuck at the back of the pack for long and makes a DT-esque hot-knife-through-butter charge to elevate himself to 15th in less than a lap.

And the upward progress doesn't end there.

"I continued pushing on and I made a few more places up," explains TC. "But then because I'd pushed so hard I just had to settle down a bit. I had a few bad laps and a small crash and I dropped back to 17th which to be fair I was all right with."

While the opening gambit goes reasonably well the second encounter is more or less all over before it really gets going. "I was really up for it but on the second little jump a hay bale got flicked up in front of me, I hit it and went right over the bars. It was a big crash. I was upside down and back to front and it took me four laps to even catch up to the back of the pack. I pushed on for 20 minutes or so then I started getting lapped. I knew I wasn't going to get to the points so I just sort of cruised home to the finish."

While TC's 22nd overall isn't quite the result he was aiming for the 28-year-old's not too disappointed. "I could have easily scored double the points I got today but what happened is just a racing thing. With a few of the MX2 guys coming up because of the age thing it does seem that MX1 is much tougher than last year which is exactly what Youthstream wanted – they wanted this to be the premier class. There are 40 guys on the line and at least 25 of them seem to be really fast. It's gonna be a tough year for sure but you've just gotta stay safe and keep chipping away at it."



Swordy's GP lasts 15 minutes before Epstein-Barr takes its toll



TC scores first time out before becoming another victim of a low-flying hay bale



Former champ Philippaerts goes 2-7 in Bulgaria

fourth and Anthony Boissiere throttles the factory TM to an unfamiliar top five start.

While Nagl works on eking out a lead Cairoli has his hands full with an on-form Philippaerts who's doing everything he can to keep the champ at bay. But after three laps of pressure the Monster Energy Yamaha rider folds which makes it a KTM 1-2 at the head of the pack.

The battle for the win now boils down to Nagl versus Cairoli and 450cc four-stroke versus 350. For the first half of the race Nagl holds the advantage but on lap nine of 20 the Italian passes the German for the lead and from there pulls away to give the 350F its first ever world championship moto victory.

One point of interest regarding Cairoli's two rides is that each moto takes the three-time world champion almost exactly the same amount of time to finish the 20 laps in – 41:08.306 in the opener and 41:06.743 in the day's final moto on a much rougher track. Whether that's just a coincidence or a sign of how consistent it's possible to be on the 350 in

changing conditions remains to be seen.

While Cairoli creams them the ride of the race has to come from 2007 MX1 world champ Steve Ramon who powers past Boissiere, Philippaerts, Sebastien Pourcel and Teka team-mate Desalle on his way to third. In fact if the Belgian rider hadn't spent so long locked in combat with Clement that third could have quite possibly been a second such was the rate The Bomb was reeling in the leaders.

"Clement's not the easiest guy to pass and we touched two or three times I think," says Steve. "For sure if I could have passed him sooner I could have easily caught up Max and then I could have been on the podium with third overall. I'm not happy but let me say this, if Clement does this more then it's gonna be payback time."

Desalle's aggressive riding pays off and the 20-year-old snatches the final step on the podium with third overall on the day. "For sure this is a good result to start the season," claims Clement. "I did not want to crash

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Soubeyras keeps the two-smoke flame burning

SMOKING THRILLS!

CEDRIC SOUBEYRAS IS THE FAST FRENCHIE WHO'S SWAPPED HIS REGULAR FOUR-BANGER FOR A TWO-SMOKER...

British supercross fans will no doubt recognise the name Cedric Soubeyras as he's the young up n' coming Frenchie who raced the final two rounds of this winter's Future West series in Liverpool and London. As well as being a potent threat to win indoors Cedric is also pretty handy at good old fashioned outdoor motocross too and the recently turned 21-year-old resident of Avignon raced to 25th in his rookie world championship year with SRS Honda in the MX2 class in '09.

For 2010 'Soub' has something a little bit special lined up and after signing with German outfit Sarholz KTM over the winter will race a 250SX in the premier MX1 division which makes him the first full-time two-stroke competitor since way back in 2005. While Cedric's already proved he can beat the 450s on his new weapon indoors to become King of Geneva, on paper at least Cedric should be at a massive disadvantage in the great outdoors. Not that he sees it that way...

"The way I see it is like this – what I lose on the uphill I gain on the downhill so although I do have to ride differently than the four-stroke riders it's still possible to go fast. You know I've always loved racing two-strokes – it's what I grew up on and I plan to continue riding the 250cc two-stroke for the rest of the season."

Consistently in the top 20 during Saturday's timed practice sessions, Cedric starts badly in the qualifying heat and fails to make much progress through the pack – eventually finishing in 23rd position. And with the track drying out and becoming way slicker many feel the writing is on the wall for the two-stroke avenger and points aren't going to be a possibility.

But after fighting through the pack from a 30th place start in the opening points-paying moto up to 19th, Soubeyras goes one better in moto two to end the day 21st overall sandwiched between the 14th and 15th placed finishers in last year's MX1 series, Gregory Aranda on the Bud Racing Kawasaki and Buildbase CCM's Tom Church.

"My first GP on the two-stroke was not so bad. In the first moto today I had a bad start and I had to battle through the pack which was a good ride for me. In the second moto I started a little bit better and battled with Julien Bill and Tanel Leok for the whole race and finished right between them in 18th – that was another good race. I just hope now I can continue to get better and to keep on scoring points."

RESULTS:

MX1 >>>

1	Max Nagl	Red Bull KTM	25+22=47
2	Antonio Cairoli	Red Bull KTM	16+25=41
3	Clement Desalle	Rockstar Teka Suzuki	20+16=36
4	David Philippaerts	Yamaha Monster Energy	22+14=36
5	Steve Ramon	Rockstar Teka Suzuki	14+20=34
6	Ken De Dycker	Yamaha Monster Energy Ricci	18+13=31
7	Jonathan Barragan	KRT Kawasaki	15+15=30
8	Xavier Boog	KRT Kawasaki	13+12=25
9	Josh Coppins	Aprilia Racing	12+11=23
10	Davide Guarneri	LS Motors Honda	11+9=20
12	Gareth Swanepoel	CAS Honda	10+8=18
17	Evgeny Bobryshev	CAS Honda	0+6=6
22	Tom Church	Buildbase CCM	4+0=4



Marc De Reuver ends the day outside the top 10

De Dycker whips his way to fourth in the opener



today or take any big risks so I am happy with how it went. I had a big battle with Steve in the second moto and when he passed me I followed him and saw some new lines so when the others caught me at the end I was able to fight them off."

Cairoli's 5-1 is possibly not the result most are expecting but he seems content to be finishing the day second overall. "The result is fine. This is a hard race for me with the 350 because this track is a real power track so second overall is a good result for me. It's a really good start to the

championship for me and I hope I can keep on taking good points at each GP this season."

But the winner on the day and the championship leader is Nagl who claims the red plate for the first time in his career. "I'm really happy because I have the red plate for the first time now and for sure I will try to keep it for as long as possible," says Max. "I twice got holeshots and that was my goal because if you are good at the start it's easier to stay somewhere in the top five."



Cairoli gives KTM's 350 its debut GP race win second time out

Marvellous Marv Musquin is in unbeatable form as he gets his title defence off to a perfect start



MARV ATTACKS!

MARVELLOUS MUSQUIN KEEPS IT WFO TO TAKE MAXIMUM POINTS IN MX2

When Teka Suzuki's Ken Roczen wins Saturday's qualifying heat from behind – passing reigning champ Musquin and his KTM team-mate Jeffrey Herlings along the way – everyone thinks the German Wunderkind is well on his way to dominating the full weekend's proceedings. But nobody tells Musquin that it's Ken's time to shine as the 20-year-old from La Reole in South West France dominates come race day.

Marv's simply awesome in moto one and after blowing by holeshooter Herlings simply leaves 'em for dead. Okay, Roczen hangs tough for the first 20 minutes or so but he's the only rider on the track close to running Marv's marvellous pace with the other 38 runners

consistently at least two to three seconds off the leader's lap times.

Behind Musquin and Roczen, GP rookie Herlings starts a backwards slide that sees him eaten up by the Pro Circuit-tuned CLS Kawasakis of Steven Frossard and Jeremy Van Horebeek as well as the factory Suzuki of 18-year-old Swiss star Arnaud Tonus.

While the top six stays relatively static, from seventh to 10th there's all-out war blazing as Shaun Simpson, Zach Osborne, Joel Roelants and Jake Nicholls trade places throughout the 35-minute plus two lap moto to eventually finish in that order.

Amazingly, just the top 10 plus 11th placed rider Harri Kullas finish on the same lap as the

leader and that's only because Musquin backs it off by around five seconds a lap on the 17th tour of 20. If Marv hadn't rolled back the throttle there's no doubt in my mind that he could have lapped Simpson in seventh – nuts or what! The big question is did Roczen just let him go in a bid to save energy for the second moto so he could steal the overall?

Whether he did or did not quickly becomes irrelevant as the German teenager topples over in a tight left-hand rut on the opening lap after he snatches the lead from Herlings who takes his second holeshoot of the day. With Kenny kindly opening up the door it's Musquin who takes over at the front once more. Consistently quickest he once again opens up an unassailable lead >>

WOUNDED WARRIOR!

SHAUN SIMPSON'S BATTLE TO BE RACE-READY FOR ROUND ONE...

It's no secret that Shaun Simpson's coming into the first round of the new championship at less than 100 per cent although I don't think anybody other than the close-knit Simpson family and the management team at the KTM factory squad know just how bad Shaun's injuries actually are.

Still sporting a slight limp and doing his best to hide a swollen sausage finger with the deep cut on it far from healed, Shaun's biggest problem at Sevlievo isn't actually his injuries but the complete lack of bike time heading into the season opener that they've caused...

DBR: Following your win in Mantova you had a pretty torrid pre-season with problems in both Valence and Hawkstone which screwed up your preparations for round one here in Bulgaria. How did you mentally adapt to the change of situation?

SS: "I think it's just something I needed to get on with. There is nothing you can do to turn back time and all I could do is really focus on what I set out to achieve in the first place and that was to be in the best possible shape come the GPs.

"For sure it's been difficult having three weeks off the bike and I lost a lot of the speed and strength that I had built up but I'm positive that I'm not far away and it will come back in the next few weeks – I'll be 100 per cent ready soon."

DBR: The injuries you sustained at Hawkstone Park were actually much worse than you made public at the time...

SS: "After Hawkstone I had three main injuries really. I had a cut around my right eye, stretched ligaments in my right hip and a severe cut and two broken bones in my left ring finger. The eye was no real problem. Vision was never a problem – although I still have a small bloodshot bit – and they simply glued the cut shut back together so that's all sweet.

"My hip was more of a concern though so they took some x-rays and a scan to check it all out but everything was pretty much okay – the ligaments are just stretched a bit and I'm told they could take up to six weeks to feel normal again! The first few days I couldn't walk on it at all but now it's much better. I'm still getting a bit of pain from it and I have a bit of a limp but it's pretty much okay.

"The worst thing was my finger. Somehow it got caught between the handlebar and either a stone or the clutch lever and to be honest looked just like a burst sausage being cut all down one side and right across the end. I had to have my arm frozen and a doctor go in there and clean out all the grass and Hawkstone dirt so it didn't get infected. After that it was just a waiting game until I could ride again. I couldn't ride too early because the wound would just open up and I knew I'd be right back to stage one so I waited three weeks before getting back on the bike.

"One funny thing that happened about a week or so before my first ride was when I was loading a toolbox into the back of my van I grabbed the door post with my left hand to steady myself and the wind blew the door closed and caught my finger right in there. There were a few choice words and a lot of blood and a lot of pain too. Nice.

"To get around the problem with my finger here in Sevlievo we put an extra piece of grip on the bars so I didn't have to put too much pressure right on the sore part and I also put a small bandage on to stop it getting dirty!"

DBR: And you also had that nifty extra large hand protector your brother Stefan crafted for you – how did that work out?

SS: "Well I didn't feel any small stones or dirt hit my finger so it must have done a good job. That's basically what it was for because my finger is still really tender and the slightest knock really hurts so big hand protection is definitely needed!"

DBR: With the situation as it was what were your goals coming into Bulgaria?

SS: "I just wanted to have two solid races with no mistakes and finish inside the top seven. I almost did that but I'm not overly disappointed that I didn't because I know I gave 100 per cent and I also know that there's a long season ahead."

DBR: How would you say the weekend went all in all?

SS: "As good as it could have. I'm a bit pissed that I made a mistake in the heat race and could only manage 18th as it made it much harder work for me to get a good start in Sunday's races. But I did a good job to get good starts from out there and I was right up there in the second moto until I had a small off-track excursion."

DBR: What actually happened there?

SS: "I was running third after passing Tonus on the first lap and I followed Marvin's line around the corner just after Pit Lane. The line went from right to left up the face of the tabletop and I ended up jumping too far left and landing on the side of the jump. This caused me to burst through the green fence and end up on the service road next to the track. There was a concrete lined ditch between the road and the fence so I had to go down the road for 200 or 300 metres before I could rejoin the track. I lost three places but it was a nice smooth line!"

DBR: Were you worried that someone might protest you for riding off the course?

SS: "No because I lost three places and besides it was a much longer way around."

DBR: What's the plan from here in out and when can we expect to see you back at 100 per cent?

SS: "I'm just going to keep on working hard during the week and building things up slowly so I don't bust myself and have a dip in my condition. I think that because I'm not 100 per cent at the moment that I'll be able to stay at 100 per cent longer when I do get there. I'm looking to be fully fit at Valkenswaard or thereabouts."

DBR: Did your rivals perform how you expected them to?

SS: "Yeah, pretty much. We all really knew who the main guys were before the weekend and they got on with it and did their job. I'm not worried about that, I'm just focused on getting up there myself."



Shaun Simpson battles through the pain barrier to a pair of solid finishes



RAPID ROOKIE!

JEFFREY HERLINGS' OUTSTANDING START TO HIS GP CAREER

Finishing fourth overall in your first MX2 GP is pretty impressive – especially so when you're considered to be a sand specialist and the first race of your world championship career is on the hardpack of Sevillevo.

Right from the off it's obvious that 15-year-old Dutchman Jeffrey Herlings is on the pace in Sevillevo as he takes fastest time in the weekend opening Free Practice session. Dropping to fourth in the pre-qualifier Herlings then takes the holeshot in the qualifying heat and leads the race for six of the 12 laps before dropping behind fellow 15-year-old Ken Roczen and elder team-mate Marvin Musquin to eventually finish third.

Two more holeshots on Sunday prove Saturday's quick start was no fluke and when the day's done and dusted Herlings ends up just off the podium in fourth overall courtesy of his very impressive 6-3 scorecard. When you consider that not even Ken Roczen performed so well in his debut GP – he was seventh overall with a 9-4 in Agueda – it's pretty clear to see that Herlings has a good future in the MX2 world championship.

"Yeah, this weekend was my first GP," says Jeffery. "I pulled the holeshot in the first heat and led for a couple of laps before finishing in sixth. I also got the holeshot in the second heat and led for some laps before I got passed by Marvin and Ken. I eventually finished third which was amazing for my first GP. I felt pretty strong this weekend. I was fourth overall and I'm very happy about that."



Ken Roczen wins Saturday's qualifier but can't repeat the feat when it really matters



Jeffrey Herlings has a stellar start to his GP career

and powers to his second win of the day.

Roczen remounts in sixth behind team-mate Tonus and Frenchman Frossard just before all three benefit from a Simpson trip through the green netting that sees the Scotsman stuck on the wrong side of a concrete drainage ditch. Following a trip down a service road Shaun gets back on track in eighth place – it's just one of those starts to the season for the unlucky 22-year-old.

The early running order is Musquin first with Herlings second ahead of Tonus, Frossard and Roczen while Nicholls looks settled in an outstanding sixth on the #45 KTM. That sixth becomes fifth when Frossard fecks up although the Frenchman comes barrelling back by just

three laps later around the same time that Roczen swipes second from Herlings. From that point on the top three stay the same until the finish while Frossard snatches fourth from under the nose of Tonus as Van Horebeek has to settle for sixth ahead of Osborne, Nicholls and Simpson.

But the day belongs to just one man. "For the championship it is very good to win the first GP," says Musquin later. "Everything was perfect for me this weekend – the bike was good, my speed was good, the track was good and to win was also good. My riding was free and easy all weekend and when I got out front in the races I was able to ride my lines. It's definitely been a good start to the series for me."

"It's been a pretty good start to the championship for me," reckons Roczen. "The first start was okay and I got away well with Musquin but I had a few problems with lappers and he was able to pull a gap. At that point I started to think about conserving energy for the second moto so I could win the overall."

"When I got an even better start in the second race I thought everything was going to be perfect. I passed Herlings for the lead on lap one but I came around a corner, got a little bit crazy and crashed in a rut. It was a stupid mistake and it was important that I didn't go even more crazy and make the situation worse. I finally got second again and second overall which is okay."

BITS FROM THE BRITS!

HOW OUR TROOPS FARED IN THE BATTLE OF BULGARIA...

While Brits in MX1 are a little thin on the ground the situation is much different in the MX2 class where we've got no fewer than five UK passport holders (actually Graeme Irwin is currently out with a shoulder injury so actually we do have fewer than five – d'oh!) and two international interlopers who ride for UK teams to keep an eye on.

Of all the British-based riders racing in Sevlievo it's that hunky chunk of 100 per cent prime US beef Zach Osborne who comes out on top although it's a very close run thing. Osborne's in love with the track all weekend – "it's been awesome, last year it was like a motorway from start to finish but this year it got rough and rutted" – and armed with that ultra quick Cosworth Bike-It Dixon Yamahauler is second in free practice and fifth in the pre-qualifying timed session. An 11th place in the heat race with a dodgy back brake is certainly no disaster and when it's back to the timing beams for Sunday morning warm-up Zach's right at the top of the charts once more but that all counts for squat when the gates drop for the points-payers.

"Man I got a terrible start in that first moto and I had to work my way up through the pack," says Zach. "I soon got through to sixth or seventh though but then I got tight in the middle of the race and dropped back to 10th again. I finally found the flow back in the last few minutes and then I could come back to eighth."

"In the second race I got a more decent start but it seemed like every line I chose on the first lap there was something going on in it – someone crashed or just stopped or something. I dropped back to 15th or so and then had to come through again so I fought the whole race and I got a good rhythm coming through behind Van Horebeek and I pulled through to seventh for seventh overall."

With factory KTM star Shaun Simpson eighth overall it's another Brit Jake Nicholls who sits ninth on the HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK machine when it's all done and dusted. "I worked hard in both races," says Jake who celebrates his 20th birthday on the day. "I didn't get such a great start in the first moto but I put my head down and pulled through. It was a bit of a shock to the system with it being the first 40-minute moto of the year but I pushed hard and got in a few battles."

"In the second moto I got a better start, right up there in the mix and I had a great first quarter of the race. I was running fifth and sixth and I was battling hard and really enjoying it. I worked really hard in the beginning so when Zach and Van Horebeek caught me at the end I didn't really have anything for them. I was happy that I had a big old gap back to ninth so I just settled for eighth which with my 10th in the first moto was good enough for ninth overall."

"My goal before I came here was to be in the top 10 and I knew it was going to be tough because we haven't ridden anything like this yet this year and I haven't done any 40-minute races either. I'm really happy with what I've achieved here today and it gives me a great base to work from."

Another UK resident who's happy with his points haul and looking forwards to the rest of the season after performing well in Sevlievo is West Sussex teenager Mel Pocock. "It's been a mega start to the GP season for me – I had a 15th and an 18th. I came here with the goal to score points in both races and that's what I've done."

While Mel's stoked with his nine points he's not too keen on the warm weather. "It's been really tough for me here because it's been so damn hot. I've got ginger hair and hot weather just drains me – it really does. But everything's okay so bring on the rest of the year!"

The final points scorer from the UK brat pack is curly topped MVR-D Suzuki teamster Matiss Karro who manages 20th both times under testing circumstances to secure a pair of points. A crash in the opening moto and a trip to Pit Lane second time out keep Karro from reaching his full potential.

Making his GP debut in Bulgaria – but failing to pick up any world championship points – is 19-year-old Ulsterman Edward Allingham who actually acquires himself really well in the tough conditions. Battling hard to the end of both races Ed's credited with a 27-28 finishes which, let's be honest, isn't too bad for a first attempt.

"It was a good experience but much harder than I expected because everyone's going fast right back to the last guy," reckons Ed. "It's just good to get it out of the way and I'm pleased with my results considering my inexperience. My hands were getting sore at the end of the race but my fitness was good – I'm glad to get some of the nerves out of the way and I'll be looking to score points after the fifth round or so."

RESULTS:

MX2 >>>

1	Marvin Musquin	Red Bull KTM	25+25=50
2	Ken Roczen	Teka Suzuki	22+22=44
3	Steven Frossard	CLS Kawasaki	20+18=38
4	Jeffrey Herlings	Red Bull KTM	15+20=35
5	Arnaud Tonus	Teka Suzuki	18+16=34
6	Jeremy Van Horebeek	CLS Kawasaki	16+15=31
7	Zach Osborne	Bike It Cosworth Yamaha	13+14=27
8	Shaun Simpson	Red Bull KTM	14+12=26
9	Jake Nicholls	HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK	11+13=24
10	Harri Kullas	Garibaldi Yamaha	10+9=19
17	Mel Pocock	Bike It Cosworth Yamaha	6+3=9
22	Matiss Karro	MVR-D Suzuki	1+1=2

Edward Allingham – out of the points but still a promising GP debut



Matiss Karro has 20/20 vision



Mel Pocock struggles in the heat but scores points in both motos



The Reverend is pumped with a rock-solid start to the season



Zach Osborne chases Simpson

mxgp

Livia Lancelot has a disappointing start to the season



GOLDEN GIRLS!

THE EXPERIENCE OF STEFFI LAIER BEATS BACK THE YOUTHFUL EXUBERANCE OF CHIARA FONTANESI AS THE WMX SERIES SETS LIGHT IN SEVLIEVO

If the 2010 WMX championship was a movie you'd have to applaud the cast director because with all the protagonists in this particular plot there's definitely someone to suit all tastes. For starters you've got the butch Bavarian (Steffi Laier), the French femme fatale (Livia Lancelot), the pint-sized princess (Larissa Papenmeier), the ridiculously hot Swedish blonde (Elin Mann), the English teacher (Sophia Paull), the cute deaf girl (Ashley Fiolek), the fiery Irish girl (Natalie Kane) and the cool new kid on the block (Chiara Fontanesi).

While the series is a publicist's dream it's still currently lacking depth and while there are 36

riders on the line in Bulgaria for round one the last handful are way off the pace. But with the overall quality of female racers improving each year and the girls at the front of the pack providing some of the best battles on any given GP weekend it's obvious this championship is only headed one way and that's up.

On paper this year's series should be one of the hardest fought as the ever improving youngsters seem to get closer to the series veterans Steffi Laier and Livia Lancelot every single year. And while it's obvious that 16-year-old Italian speedster Chiara Fontanesi's improved a whole bunch over the >>



Larissa Papenmeier battles through the pain of a broken hand

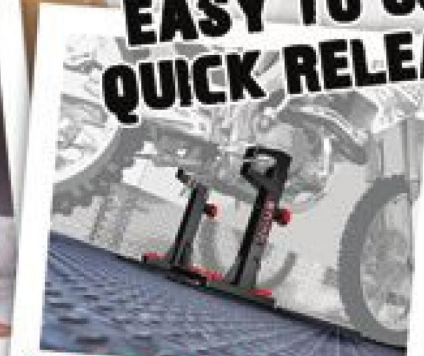


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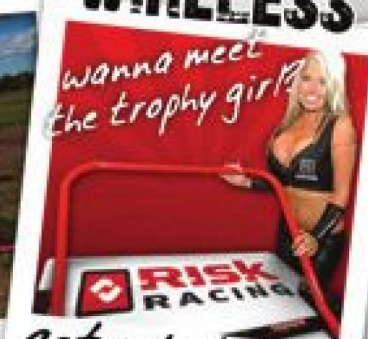
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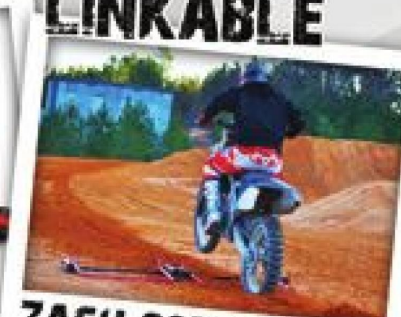
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NAT CHAT!

TWO TICKS WITH ULSTER'S LEADING LADY...

Like many of the racers in Bulgaria, HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK's Natalie Kane was keen to get off as soon as her races had finished so she could get home as quickly as possible. Before embarking on the monster drive back to Blighty with her family Natalie filled us in on her action-packed weekend...

DBR: How do you feel the first GP of the year went for you?

NK: "In free practice, qualifying and the last race I rode okay but in the first moto I rode really tight, I nearly crashed a couple of times and then I lost that tow from the leaders and ended up out on my own in about seventh place. It was a good enough position I suppose but I wanted to do better – I just got a s**t start, nearly crashed and just rode a bit s**t to be honest."

"The second moto was much better and I was able to mix it up a bit more. I collided with Chiara Fontanesi and had a good battle with Ashley Fiolek so I'm a wee bit happier. Seventh overall wasn't really the result I was looking for but it's a good starting point for the championship."

DBR: Do you think racing with the MX2 guys at the Maxxis and Red Bull Pro Nats helped you out at all?

NK: "It really helped a lot and I find I'm much more aggressive on the bike now – that really helps when I get a bad start and I'm able to push through quite quickly. It's just made me more confident to go for gaps I suppose."

DBR: Tell us a little bit about the bike your mechanic Andy Pringle has built for you...

NK: "The bike Andy's built has an electric start because I'm short and there's so much compression on the KTM that I sometimes struggle to start it if I crash or stall the engine. In a championship like this that could mean missing out on scoring valuable points and that's just not acceptable. The electric start helps me out a lot and he's also shortened the sub-frame a little and lowered the handlebars so the bike feels level and it doesn't sit down low at the back."



RESULTS:

WMX >>

1	Steffi Laier	Red Bull KTM	25+25=50
2	Chiara Fontanesi	Fonta MX Yamaha	22+20=42
3	Maria Franke	Diga KTM	16+22=38
4	Livia Lancelot	HDI KTM	15+18=33
5	Ashley Fiolek	LS Motors Honda	18+15=33
6	Larissa Papenmeier	Teka Suzuki	20+13=33
7	Natalie Kane	HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK	14+16=30
8	Elin Mann	KTM Scandinavia	13+14=27
9	Elien De Winter	Aleja Racing Team KTM	11+10=21
10	Marielle De Mol	ADS-MXN Yamaha	8+12=20
19	Sophia Paull	Yamaha	0+4=4

A pair of wins for defending champion Steffi Laier



Papenmeier picks up sixth

winter months there's still nobody else who's ready to take the fight to the established stars.

Red Bull KTM's Laier leads every lap at round one to come away with maximum points. "I didn't expect that there would be such a big gap between me and the other riders and I hope I can go on like that," says Steffi. "I think I am much smoother than last year because I already did quite a few pre-season races and I don't feel so much pressure because I already have the title – I'll try to stay like that!"

Fontanesi takes the second step on the podium at the end of the day with 3-2 finishes on her new four-stroke Yamaha while Maria Franke ends up in the bronze medal position as her 5-2 scorecard outcores both Lancelot and Fiolek who end up tied for fourth. Both Livia and Ashley have their problems in Sevlievo – it's a particularly bad weekend for Livia on her

KTM debut – but you can pretty much guarantee they'll bounce back strong in Agueda at round two.

Sixth sounds like a disastrous start to the season for Suzuki's Larissa Papenmeier but coming into round one with an injured hand the pint-sized 20-year-old's just satisfied to be scoring points. "I'm happy I could even ride here so the results are okay and I was pleased to leave with third in the first moto. For the second I had a good start but I crashed on the first tabletop and everybody got away. I tried to catch the rest and got up to eighth which was all right."

Just two Brits make the long journey to Bulgaria with HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK's Natalie Kane ending the day seventh overall while plucky privateer Sophia Paull squeezes home just inside the top 20!



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Life Without Limitations

Chiara Fontanesi is
second overall



PRIVATEER PICNIC!

A SPEEDY 96-SECOND SIT-DOWN LUNCH WITH SOPHIA PAULL...

Blighty's very own Sophia Paull is one of the few girls to have entered each and every one of the WMX GPs since the series began back in 2005! This year Sophia's doing things the hard way and struggling to juggle working life, training and racing.

To make things even more difficult for the Portsmouth-based privateer at Sevlievo she's pitting out of a Fiat Punto rent-a-wreck in the back end of the paddock and totally on her own as boyfriend Davide Guarneri has his own stuff to deal with (he's a world championship scramble bike rider himself or something).

DBR: How hard has it been for you to make it to the opening GP of the year?

SP: "It's been demoralisingly difficult. It's been really hard and I've been working really hard to get here and I don't mean working really hard on the bike, I mean working hard cleaning toilets for the last three months so I could afford to come here at all. I didn't have a bike to ride until four weeks ago and then I didn't have any time to ride and I didn't have any money to ride so yeah it's been pretty difficult."

DBR: Do you think not being able to ride much before coming out here held you back a little bit this weekend?

SP: "Definitely. But also because I was here on my own I didn't have anyone pit boarding me and I didn't know what position I was in. I had a really bad start in that first moto and I didn't realise how far I'd come through the pack – I thought I was doing *** and if I'd known that I was in a points paying position I'd have maybe pushed on a bit harder to the finish."

DBR: In an ideal world would you like to be picked up by one of the big teams?

SP: "I'm not interested in being in one of those teams because to be honest I don't think I'm good enough. But it'd be cool if somebody was here to encourage me and for there to be somebody to welcome me off the track with a smile, even if I've done crap."

DBR: If you were to pick up some support and concentrate more on riding than cleaning toilets how do you think you'd do?

SP: "If I was helped and I didn't have to worry about my bike breaking or spending the money I'd saved up to get to the GPs on repairs and stuff I think I could easily be somewhere around the top 10. It's just difficult at the moment because I'm tired from working and travelling and having to prepare my bike. I'm only tired today because I've washed my bike four times now and that tires you out more than you'd think."

DBR: Just think how tired you'd be if you'd done a proper job of cleaning it...

SP: "Oh shut up. I was tired and my feet were wet and I was cold and I wanted to cry. I thought I'd got all that mud off and I'm looking at it now and I think it's just appearing from nowhere."

DBR: So why do you do it then if it's all so hard that it makes you want to cry?

SP: "Because I know I can be better and that's what annoys me the most. A few years ago when I was riding more regularly I was right up there with Elien De Winter and Marianne Veenstra who are regularly up there in the top 10 so I know I can do it. I know I can definitely go faster but I just don't ride enough."

DBR: Finally, tell me a little bit about your bike – it looks a bit, erm, well special...

SP: "Well it's a 2008 Yamaha YZ125 that my dad bought off eBay for about two grand. It's quite fast but the clutch has gone, it needs a new chain and sprockets and it's just generally tired – it's banging and jumping out of gear and all sorts of lovely things but it's getting around. I think it just needs a good looking at."



Sophia Paull – clean your bike young lady!

American teen
Ashley Fiolek



Altered Beasts

WE TEST A PAIR OF FIRE-BREATHING 450s HEAD-TO-HEAD IN A WAR OF THE ROSES STYLE BIKER BUILD-OFF BETWEEN TWO OF BRITAIN'S TOP MOTOCROSS TEAMS – LANCASHIRE'S STR HONDA AND LPE KAWASAKI FROM T'OTHER SIDE OF THE PENNINES...

Words by **Ed Bradley** Photos by **Sutty**

The latest bunch of 450cc four-stroke motocross bikes are right at the pinnacle of dirt bike development and about as close to being race-ready straight-out-of-the-crate as you can get.

Popping out way more ponies than most mere humans can handle, you'd think that these high-tech, EFI-fed MX1 missiles would be more than machine enough for absolutely anybody. But in the pro ranks where a split second gained here or there can mean the difference between winning or not, each and every one of the major race teams work all hours to exploit the very best from their weaponry.

While some teams have access to

factory-supplied unobtainium most aren't so fortunate so – just like the average dirt bike racer – have to buy, blag or borrow what they believe to be the best parts possible to beef-up their bikes and get that all-important edge over the competition. The big question is can any of these teams actually massively improve on the stock bikes?

To find out the answer we invited two non-factory teams – Steve James' Maxxis Henderson LPE Kawasaki outfit and Steve Turner's Proppa.com Honda – to Doncaster Moto Parc (www.doncastermotoparc.co.uk) for some thorough and in-depth testing carried out by former GP pilot Ed Bradley.

Over to you Ed...

James Noble's PROPPA.com Honda is much more of a hard-hitting handful



*Solid, chunky and
safe – Jordan Rose's
LPE Kawasaki
inspires confidence*



"I'm beginning to feel a little like Ethan Hunt in Mission Impossible! Every now and then I open up my email inbox to find an unexpected assignment from DBR and this one simply read 'any chance of hijacking Finningley for a 450 head-to-head next Tuesday – we want you to share the testing duties with Jeff Perrett'.

"Not much to go on! But I love a challenge, adore riding 450s and I used to race with Jeff as early as '89 when we both rode for Cagiva UK (for the young 'uns actually reading this instead of just looking at the pictures then, first of all, well done and, secondly, Cagiva were an Italian manufacturer bought by Husqvarna in 1990)!

"As I began to ponder how awesome it was going to be testing 450 race bikes back-to-back the mission changed a little. 'The ginger wang can't make it – are you all right to fly solo?' Of course...

"The day of the test dawned and I was prepared for loads of riding and was really excited, only to have this excitement increased even more when an LPE Kawasaki team van rocked up with Jordan Rose's race bike. Bonus! Followed shortly afterwards by an STR team van with James Noble's race bike in it. Double bonus!

"While Suttly was taking the static photos of the trick race bikes I got to have a sniff around and ask the mechanics questions about what's been modified. A visual check of the bikes reveals very little extra going on other than what

you'd expect from a team bike. Both bikes have oversized front braking discs, wider footrests and each have full DEP exhaust systems on them as well as some other aftermarket goodies too. So what other modifications do the bikes have going on? Both bikes are using standard suspension with modified internals and have re-mapped ignition curves.

"The Honda's motor has had plenty of work done including re-profiled cams, modified piston and a different ignition plus some alterations to the chassis and rear suspension. The Kawasaki on the other hand has had no further work done to the chassis, suspension or motor!

"While the LPE team and riders believe that their bike is fast enough – which is a fair comment – I'm surprised that they haven't even had the head flowed so that the engine can perform as it's been designed to do so by removing the slight imperfections that come with mass produced units. It's a great advert for Kawasaki but I would have expected a British championship team to want things to be perfect in this department.

"Once Suttly's finished shooting the statics it's time to get down to business but first I have to adhere to an instruction from DBR's Deputy Dawg – the bikes have to stay the same so no moving the handlebars, levers, brake pedals or gear levers. And he's telling me – Mr Fussy – who knows exactly how I like my bike to be set

up and what feels comfortable. Cue the opening bars to the Mission Impossible theme tune.

"The first bike I ride is Jordan's KXF and my initial impression is that it feels good. The handlebars are in a good position although the levers, brake pedal and gear lever are too low for me. As I excitedly ride towards the track entrance there are a number of quite large choppy bumps and as I go over them – sat down – the suspension soaks them up so well I can hardly feel them. I know right there and then this is going to be a really great bike to ride.

"Brian and Merv had been busy preparing the track for the test and after the recent rain DMP was grippy and the jump faces sweet. This means that I can get a good feel for how the bikes hold the turns, how the bikes accelerate out of the turns, how fast I can get them down the straights, how quick I can stop them and how nimble they are when jumping.

"After cutting a few lines on the track I start to build my speed up and, as you'd expect, the faster I go the better the LPE Kawasaki performs. The bike feels solid, chunky and safe which gives confidence and allows me to relax when the speeds are high. The front brake is great, slowing the bike down quickly and working with the forks a treat. Under heavy braking the forks compress without the wheel pushing to one side and soak up the little braking bumps without any feedback on the bars at all – just nice and



The Honda's powerplant has had plenty of tweaks and tickles – and it shows!

The 450 Kawasaki is a great advert for how well a mostly stock bike can be made to perform



smooth. The back brake feels like your usual rear brake and is easy to use.

"For corners the shock tracks really well, sitting down and giving a lot of traction coming out of turns. It's easy to place the front end into the line you want to use, however, there does seem to be an odd stiffness to the steering.

"The motor feels very much like your usual 450cc four-stroke engine – strong and smooth through and exiting the turns, maintaining its strength and drive for the whole of the straight. One thing that I did struggle with which I also noticed when testing the KX250F was shifting gears. The gear lever seems closer to the footrest compared to other bikes and I would have loved to move the lever up one spline on the output shaft to make changing gears easier.

"What I really enjoyed about riding Jordan's bike was the suspension. It is so plush. The first part of the stroke is really soft and carries on being soft well into the mid-stroke with it stiffening up just in time before the bottom. This bike soaks up bumps really well which helps save energy and makes it easy over rougher ground. The rebound on the other hand seems fast with the shock kicking back over one of the smaller jumps and the front end fired back on a couple of other sections too. Whether Jordan usually has the rebound this quick or it's how the bike was set up for the British championship round at Mallory I don't know. But it unnerved me a little.

"The bike feels really stable and for

jumps it is no different. The bike gives confidence and is set up so well that it is really balanced in the air too.

"So with the first moto done on the Kawasaki it's time to jump straight onto James' Honda and the first thing I notice is that the seat is slimmer and harder which makes it really easy to sit right up at the front of the bike – like on the petrol cap! The bars are in a good position – in fact, it's amazing that both bikes are set up almost the same, the only real difference being that James has his gear lever and brake pedal a little higher than Jordan. However, this is where any similarities stop.

"Out on the track and the power of the Honda is literally hammered home – it rips! After riding Jordan's smooth and predictable bike and then riding James' I had to change my riding style dramatically. To begin with I couldn't work out why I was having to use the outside lines. I actually thought it wasn't turning very well but it quickly became apparent that I was hauling so much ass down the straights I was missing my braking points causing me to run wide in the turns.

"There are no pleasantries about the power delivery. Get the bike around the turn, hold the throttle full, give the clutch a quick slip and hold on – tight! Using this point and shoot technique the bike comes alive.

"All that power needs anchors that are up to the job and the rear brake on the STR Honda is super sharp and very powerful. In contrast the front brake



tered



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Specifications

MAXXIS HENDERSON LPE KAWASAKI KX450F

Motor: Stock bore and stroke with no actual engine modifications or tuning although the team do use different EFI settings for different tracks and conditions

Clutch: Hinson clutch basket, cover and gasket, Pro Circuit clutch springs

Radiators/hoses: Stock radiators with Samco hoses

Lubricants: Motorex

Suspension: The suspension is sorted by Mark Eastwood at ERS – stock KYB stuff but re-valved and set-up to suit Jordan

Wheels: Talon wheels

Tyres: Factory Maxxis

Brakes: Braking discs with DP pads

Exhaust: DEP S7

Chain/sprockets: DID chains and Renthal sprockets

Air filter: Twin Air

Triple clamps: Stock with Renthal adapters for oversize bars

Handlebars: Renthal

Controls: Fro Systems footpegs, stock brake, clutch and gear levers

Cables/brake hoses: Stock

Plastics: Acerbis plastics with Spiral GFX graphics

Protection: Pro Carbon

feels hard to pull in as if the brake pads are made from a really hard compound. Anyway, after six laps or so of hard squeezing to get the damn thing to stop in time for the turns the brake seems to warm up and work well – although it goes on to become spongy before the end of the session.

"The Honda's suspension is again very plush and soft on the initial part of the stroke and progressively gets harder, quicker than the Kawasaki. As for cornering, it was easy to get the bike into the turn although I found that the back end is hard and instead of the rear suspension sitting down and getting traction the rear wheel would push and break the berms away.

"Where Jordan's bike is predictable as in it's stable and goes where you want it to, the Honda is twitchy and requires more precision where you place the bike on the track. However, the bike feels so light and thin you can put it wherever you like which means this bike is great and fun to ride. I found that James' bike required more input physically and wanted to ride it more like a 250F, especially on jumps. This bike is easy to scrub on jumps mostly because it feels light and is very easy to move around on.



Altered

"So how do the LPE Kawasaki and STR Honda compare? There's no doubt that both these bikes are set up very well with great suspension settings and powerful brakes which out-perform any 'out of the crate' production bike and allow you to get on with riding the bike as fast as you can without thinking about avoiding bumps and carefully choosing your lines. Both the Kawasaki and the Honda give you lots of confidence in the bike and encourage you to ride faster! The most outstanding difference between the two is the motor set up with the Kawasaki being smooth and strong and the Honda being more aggressive.

"If I was to choose a bike for racing in our national championship it would be a tough call. The LPE Kawasaki is smooth and predictable – making it easy to maintain consistent lap times and save energy in the process – and the STR Honda is lively and arm-wrenching allowing you to put down very quick lap times that come with the price of using more physical effort.

"But the bike I would choose is the STR Honda because it feels like a racing bike that you can really push and get that exciting feeling that the bike can run away with you at any moment!"

So which bike would Ed choose? It's the STR Honda that gets his vote...



Specifications

PROPPA.COM HONDA 450R

Motor: Stock bore and stroke, currently running re-mapped standard ignition but are also testing GET UK ignition and mapping software. Engine blueprinted, flowed head, modified PROX piston, cams and valve trains. PROX valves. Gearbox surfaces refinished. All modification work carried out by NME...

Clutch: PROX basket

Radiators/hoses: GMX Radiators/ Samco hoses

Lubricants: Ipone Oils

Suspension: NME re-valved suspension with new piston and spring rates to suit rider

Wheels: Talon

Tyres: Michelin

Brakes: Delta brake discs and pads

Exhaust: DEP S7 system

Chain/sprockets: CZ chain and RaceFX sprockets

Air filter: DT1

Triple clamps: XTRIG

Handlebars: Pro Taper Henry/Reed bend with Pro Taper half-waffle medium density grips

Controls: Raptor footpegs, standard shifter, rear brake pedal and front brake lever, Works Connection clutch lever

Cables/brake hoses: Standard

Plastics: Acerbis plastics and seat, Spiral GFX graphics

Protection: Pro Carbon skid plate, disc covers, tank cover, chain guide, rear caliper protector, rear master cylinder protector



FRESH THINKING!

WITH ITS INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO STAGING EVENTS – AND SUPPORTING CLUBS – THE MC FEDERATION IS SHAKING UP THE UK MOTOCROSS SCENE. WE CAUGHT UP WITH CHAIRMAN MATT BATES AT THE OPENING ROUND OF THE RED BULL PRO NATIONALS...

Words by **Sean Lawless** Photos by **Sutty**





“Yeah, we're taking on the ACU. Why not?" Parked up in a corner of the VIP marquee at the opening Red Bull Pro National of the season, Matt Bates has taken 15 minutes out of his very busy day to talk to me about his vision for the future of British motocross.

"We've invested a lot of money and a lot of time into the MCF. I've got nothing against the ACU and I've got nothing against any other federation. I've been an ACU licence holder, I've been a BSMA licence holder. But that's no reason to say I won't take them on."

There's a wind of change blowing through British motocross. For so long the undisputed

kingpin of top-flight MX in this country, the ACU has some serious competition and together with DEP's Craig Elwell it's Matt who's providing it.

"Ultimately I see MCF as the biggest federation in the country. Off-road to start with and where it goes after then I don't know because if you look at how every other sport runs it's a similar sort of pattern. In off-road biking we want to be the federation that all clubs want to sanction their events through. And that's as simple as it is."

It's certainly an ambitious undertaking. For a federation that's barely into its third year, taking on the perceived might of the 106-year-old ACU is proper David and Goliath stuff. But with its

flagship Red Bull Pro National series squaring up to the ACU's Maxxis-backed domestic championship and a growing list of clubs affiliating to the MCF, Matt's confident that momentum is building behind him.

"It will be a natural progression and it will naturally grow and there will become a time when it will be more prestigious to win the Red Bull Pro Nationals title [than the Maxxis British championship] and a great proof of that is British Superbikes – the ACU don't run BSB and that's the most prestigious UK-based road race series by a mile.

"It shouldn't be the federation that holds the key to a series being prestigious. Brands >>



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CURRICULUM VITAE

BATES' BACKGROUND...

Matt's grown up around motocross. He rode for Kawasaki as a schoolboy and graduated to racing GPs but 'retired' in his early 20s and was offered a job with Team Green by Alec Wright who taught him the importance of customer service. But despite this life-long involvement in motocross, the 38-year-old brings experience gained in a much wider sporting sphere to the MCF.

"Events 22 is my main business. We're an events company for brands like Red Bull and have 20-odd clients all based around sports and entertainment. We will either stage events of our own like the Red Bull Pro Nationals or run events for other brands like X Fighters at Battersea or Robbie Maddison's backflip over Tower Bridge. We organised that whole thing.

"So we've got a real skill in events and that's what's enabled us to support Pro Nationals and the MCF. It's taught us a lot about how to look after people."

The Pro Nationals' title sponsor Red Bull places huge importance on consumer experience



Jeff Perrett was an early appointment as MCF's Head of Communications



like Honda, Suzuki and all the companies that spend money in supporting teams to race will soon realise – and they are realising now – that if we're bringing the right number of people and we're presenting things correctly then that's the place to be and they'll support us. And therefore this becomes the most prestigious series.

"In fact I don't agree that currently the most prestigious title is the Maxxis British championship. I actually don't think it is. It was but I think we're on a level with them now and our events are probably quite a long way ahead of theirs."

But why decide to take on the ACU? And why go to the bother of starting your own federation when there are other organisations to sanction events through? Okay, time for a little bit of history...

The MC Federation is the baby of Matt and Craig Elwell (MCF stands for Matt and Craig's Federation – simple, eh?) and the pair decided to start up on their own at the tail end of 2007 after the ACU knocked back their idea of turning

the fledgling DEP 125cc two-stroke series into an official national championship. But long before then – back in 2000 to be exact – Matt ran a company called Planit Promotions that organised a fully ACU-sanctioned five-round British supercross championship.

"I guess the MCF has come from when I ran supercross events and worked with other federations – they were so far behind in thinking and they definitely didn't look one day forward and that concerned me. So at that point I guess I realised I had to do it my own way.

"Then in 2007 Craig convinced me we should do something with two-strokes and from there we realised that if we didn't create our own federation and write our own rules we were doomed and wouldn't go any further than anything else ever has done. So that's why we started it – to support our own events.

"And then we soon realised that there are a lot of clubs out there which perhaps would look at running with us if we launched as a proper federation and that's why we brought Roy Barton

in – we have our day jobs and we can't put the time into running MCF to its full capacity."

Roy was the ACU's Motocross Manager when he jumped ship to the MCF last year in a move that demonstrated in no uncertain terms that this new federation meant business and was in it for the long haul. On top of Roy's appointment as MCF General Manager, last season also marked the inaugural Red Bull Pro Nationals series which set out to market MX to the mainstream by running events with a family-orientated 'festival' feel. So as well as the racing visitors are treated to freestyle displays, cool music and an opportunity to learn to ride an off-road bike in a controlled environment.

It's a complete package that for 2010 has been extended further now the RBPns have been rolled together with the Red Bull Elite Youth Cup and the Fuchs Silkolene Two-Stroke series over nine weekends. While this makes for a packed on-track programme, it's what happens off the track that Matt sees as being >>>



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AIMING HIGH!

MISSION STATEMENT

"The MCF is trying to make its name as a federation and therefore support young clubs, bring down the costs of staging events and then pass on our expertise of staging events to them."

"The long-term aim is that eventually your licence as a rider becomes valuable. And it's not just a licence that allows you to book into a race meeting. It's a licence that connects to all of the companies that represent us – like Dirt Bike Rider – so that that licence through our data system will act like a rewards points system."

"Throughout the year the more you race the more you earn and that's one way we're trying to bring the cost of racing down. Brands like Pirelli, Silkolene and so on can help a much wider range of riders than just the top few."

Freestyle demos help with the 'festival' feel



key to making the series a success.

"There's so much thought gone into everything. When you pull up in your car you're met by nice people that sell you a cheap ticket, there's a Red Bull vehicle playing really cool music and the whole vibe is there. A lot of it comes from having a partner like Red Bull. They have a massive influence over what happens and how we deal with their consumer as well as ours.

"We spent months trying to work out what caterers would work with us because a lot of them wanted to just pay us good money to over-charge our clients who then won't come back. There's no sense in that for me – it's about taking less money now, everyone's charged the right money and then they come back and then we gain in that direction.

"I just want to go about things in a different way and be different and create events that people want to come to. If we're always attracting a new type of spectator then they don't know who Brad Anderson is, all they see is a bloody good motocross rider. What I'm saying is that you could run a club event and if you presented it well and promoted it outside of motocross then to a new audience it's still a great day out.

"It's about being able to walk up to a burgerstand and not be ripped off for a tenner for a poxy burger. It's about not parking in the mud. It's about presentation. We present these events not for riders, we present them for the spectators. We take care of our riders but the majority of our effort goes into what services we

provide for the public. We make sure that from the minute you arrive at the gate you don't queue right the way through to when we put the freestyle on we have great commentators like Jack Burnicle. It's the whole experience."

But despite his opening statement – that the MCF is taking on the ACU – Matt's not declaring war on the establishment. Sure, he wants his federation to be the biggest and the best but it's the end result – making motocross more popular – that he's concerned with, not creating a successful federation at the expense of others.

"Just to be totally clear, I'm not doing this to be better than the ACU or stamp on any other federation. That's not the aim. The aim here is to do a lot, not just one thing. It's to put youth riders with pros at the same event, it's to bring new people into the sport, it's to look at the sport in a modern way. Just like a car brand would look at how they want to sell more cars.

"That's where I feel we fall down massively. We preach to the converted. And I want to help. I'm still young enough to have a go at trying to do something different. I didn't want to be 50 and sit back and think 'I nearly did that' or 'I could've done that'.

"And I think we are making a difference. If we stopped right this minute and you never saw another Pro National, never saw another Elite Youth Cup and the MCF disbanded we've done good for the sport because other federations have pulled their socks up, reduced costs and are doing more to help their clubs and riders and that is something I believe we've been a big part of."

MONEYMAKER!

JUMP FOR SHOW BUT CORNER FOR DOUGH – CROCK STAR STYLEE...

WORDS BY **GORDON CROCKARD** PHOTOS BY **SUTTY**

With three British Open titles and four GP wins to his name, Gordon Crockard is a bona fide motocross legend – and now he's sharing his riding secrets with DBR readers. Every month the Crock Star will run through an essential technique for everyone's racing repertoire – this month he's dealing with line choice and technique through turns. And when you've read and digested his second lesson hook up to www.dirtbikerider.com for a video demo from GC...



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"In this sequence of shots you can see two different options for lines. The approach to this turn is a steep and bumpy downhill which makes it difficult to get slowed down enough to make the inside rut. So in this case the outside line becomes more attractive as you don't need to brake as intensively as you do for the inside rut. Having said that, I preferred to take the inside rut as I feel it is faster but it did require more energy and precision riding technique to ride it correctly.

"On the approach to the turn you have to brake heavily with both the front and rear brake. Standing up with your weight over the rear of the bike is an absolute rule. This is to get as much load off your front forks as possible to allow them to work properly and also to keep the rear of the bike weighted to try and prevent the rear shock kicking and your rear wheel lifting off the ground. On my 450 KXF I needed second gear for both the inside and outside lines.

"Although I have my index finger covering the clutch lever as a precaution in case the engine needs a lift, I

actually don't dab the lever or use the clutch in any way. With enough speed the engine is capable of pulling second gear. If I were to go slower then I may need to use first gear to allow the engine to pull it.

"Once the rut offers an opportunity to lean the bike over and get on the gas then you must release the brakes and throw your weight from the rear of the bike and get as forward as possible onto the very front of the seat. You want to have your hips in front of the footpegs of the bike if you need a guide as to how far forward to sit. To do that means that the bulk of your bodyweight is in front of the rear shock and now the front of the bike will be lower and turn much better, plus your front tyre will get more traction the more weight you put to the front of the bike.

"Try and imagine that your riding pants are sewn into the seatcover and you have to lean with the bike. Your foot should be placed straight out in the direction of the front axle. If your leg is any way bent or trailing to the side then you run a high risk of catching it on the ground and

possibly injuring your leg. The main rule of cornering applies to all corners – the more you lean over the more you have to open the throttle. Always try to improve by braking later and harder, leaning over further and sooner and getting the throttle opened earlier and fuller. Simple!

"If you go around corners fast then you already have a mph headstart for going down the straights. In fact, your bike will look much faster than the others and people will think it's a big-bore or heavily-tuned for speed. When I started racing on my 1988 RM80 in 1990 it was much slower than the fresh bikes I was racing against so I had to go round corners fast if I wanted to keep up on the straights and on some days it looked like my super-slow Suzuki was one of the fastest bikes out there – but it definitely wasn't!

"So remember – jump for show, corner for dough!"

For video footage of Gordy's cornering techniques go to www.dirtbikerider.com

JC SUPERSTAR!

AS JOSH COPPINS' ILLUSTRIOUS RACING CAREER ENTERS ITS FINAL STAGES WE SIT DOWN WITH THE POPULAR KIWI TO TAKE A LOOK BACK AT SOME OF THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF AN OVERSEAS EXPERIENCE THAT'S LASTED WELL OVER 15 YEARS...

Words and photos by Suttty

Entering his 16th straight year of world championship competition, 33-year-old Kiwi Josh Coppins is now the oldest and longest serving racer in the MX1 division. Unfortunate not to have won a world championship title – he was sitting on a 107-point lead in 2007 before he broke his shoulder at Loket – the likeable Kiwi sits joint 46th on the all-time GP win list (tied with Jamie Dobb on 11 overall victories) and of course has two British MX1 titles to his name.

Making a surprise move to the Aprilia Racing team for 2010, Josh readily admits it's gonna be difficult for him to add more wins to that tally but having already gone bar-to-bar with – and beaten – some of the true legends of this great sport he seems quite satisfied with everything he's achieved so far. With his final year of GPs about to begin we took a little time to ask Josh about some of the highs and lows of his lengthy career as well as find out what the future might hold... >>





Josh gets his GP campaign for Aprilia off to a great start with two top 10 finishes in Bulgaria



Leading Marc De Reuver and Evgeny Bobryshev – JC wouldn't be racing the V-twin if he didn't think he could still post good results

DBR: You seem to have been around for a lot of years now – can you even remember when and where your first GP was?

JC: "In 1993 – the year Pedro Tragter won the world championship for Suzuki – I did the last 125cc GP of the season which was held in Manjimup, Australia. I think I was only 15 or something at the time and I remember that I didn't score any points. What I class as my first real GP was Talavera in 1995. That was in the 250 class and I went 15-15 and scored two world championship points."

DBR: So how many GPs have you ridden in total – it must be around 200 or so?

JC: "I actually don't know how many exactly but it's a lot for sure – it's like 15 years worth. I think I'll have averaged 12 GPs a year even though I missed parts of the '03, '06 and '07 seasons but aside from those occasions I've done pretty much every grand prix since 1995."

DBR: That's a lot of races. Out of all of them what would you consider to be your best memory of racing in the world championships?

JC: "My best memory is from Desertmartin in 2006. I lapped up to third place and I also straight up beat Stefan Everts – I was actually the only guy to beat him all year. De Dycker was third overall on the podium and I lapped him in the second race – I think that was pretty impressive."

DBR: And the worst memory?

JC: "My first GP back in 2003 after I'd broken my back and both legs was bad. I think I finished 16th or 17th, I just started bad and finished bad – it was bad. In saying that I was right behind Dobby and he was 125cc world champion the year before so it can't have been so bad. It was a bit of a shock but I turned things around and ended up on the box before the end of the year."

DBR: Do you reckon riding a 250 two-stroke

against the 450s hindered you that year?

JC: "In hindsight I should have maybe changed to the 450 but I'd had such a great year in '02 on the 250 I thought it would be the right bike to be on. You know, that whole year there were a lot of things that I shouldn't have done – I shouldn't have gone to America and I maybe shouldn't have ridden the two-stroke again. But I came back strong at the end of the year and I finished third at Ernee and third at Lierop – I still think I could have had a pretty good year on the 250 had I not got injured before the start of the GP season."

DBR: What have been the best and worst tracks?

JC: "My favourite ever GP track was the Isle of Wight and that's where I won my first grand prix. Everything about the GPs there was awesome. When you turned up you just went 'wow – I really want to ride here'. The layout was good, the soil was good, the atmosphere was good, there was

always a big crowd and the weather was good too.

"The worst was definitely the Irish GP when they had it at that horse racing track. I felt sorry for the Irish public more than anything because I know they have much better tracks than that to hold the GP on. I did see the pictures of the venue about a month before and it was flooded so it wasn't their entire fault. Looking back I also had a bad race there so it wasn't just the conditions that were s**t.

"That whole season was a bit bad for me really. I was dominant in '07 until I had my injury and I expected to be the same in 2008. I got to within two points of the championship lead in the middle of the year but it was just like I peaked and I couldn't go up another gear to finish the season. Overall it was a bad year."

DBR: You're officially the oldest rider in the GPs this year – how does that feel?

JC: "It's a weird feeling. I know every old guy says it but it really does feel like the time has

rushed by. What makes it weird is not only am I the old guy now but the young guys are so much younger so the gap from guys like Herlings and Roczen to myself is massive – like 18 years!"

DBR: Who was the gnarly old dude who was riding when you started out on your GP career?

JC: "When I started GPs the gnarly old dude in the 250 GPs would have to be Peter Iven. He raced for years after I started and he was an old guy even at the beginning. He was the sort of rider who'd always be pushing on – even if he got a bad start he'd just keep chugging on.

"If he came up behind you in the last 10 minutes you just knew it was all over and he'd come by but I'd fight tooth and nail not to let him past. In '99 I started battling with him a bit more and then I pretty much got the better of him but I'd always have to keep an eye out in those last 10 minutes."

DBR: In all those years what sort of changes have you seen in the GP scene – I mean nobody ever dreamt you'd be racing a 450cc four-stroke with fuel injection and a V-twin engine...

JC: "Hey, 12 months ago I never dreamt I'd be racing one of them! But, yeah, I've seen a lot of changes – not only with the bikes but with the races too. I'm one of the only riders who used to race GPs before there was a promoter – I'm talking back when the clubs ran the races. Then Action Group came in, then Dorna and now Youthstream – so as well as seeing all the technical changes with the machinery I've seen like four different ways of running races – I've gone through getting qualification money and prize money in Swiss Francs, then there were the Dorna times of getting five grand for a win and now we get nothing."

DBR: What would you say was your most lucrative year in a financial sense?

JC: "2008 was definitely my best year financially and 2007 was pretty good too but I lost a bunch with not winning the championship. Because I was so dominant in '07 when Monster Energy came onboard I had a real good contract so overall my time with Yamaha was definitely the best financially but out of all of them I'll say 2008 was definitely pretty bloody good."

DBR: But 2007 was so close to being so much better – if only you hadn't had that technical problem...

JC: "Yeah, that's right – and Yamaha openly admit that the rear brake went. I never really asked exactly what the problem was because it's irrelevant really but I believe something went wrong on the production line and it caused a problem – the big problem was for me it all just happened in the wrong place.

"I mean, yesterday I was out practising and a stone got jammed in my brake pedal so it didn't work and I overshot a turn – it just so happened that this time it wasn't after a downhill double. Back then it was just wrong place, wrong time, wrong year but that's the way it goes...

"In hindsight 2007 was a great year and I really can't complain too much about it because I won a lot of GPs and had a 107-point lead in the championship when it all happened. >>

THE MANAGEMENT!

JC'S THOUGHTS ON YOUTHSTREAM...

"Overall I think Youthstream do a good job. For sure they do some things that make me think 'hmmm, that's a bit strange' but at other times they do things that are very good. They've definitely lifted the series as a whole and we definitely visit better venues than we used to.

"The tracks issue is something I wanted to go into great detail in the Pro Probe thing but couldn't. Somebody asked 'do I like the old tracks or the new tracks more?' and I have to say I like the old tracks more and I think that sometimes Youthstream miss the point that if the racing is good then everyone will be happy.

"But, I totally understand that from the commercial side of things that when you bring a sponsor to a race you can't bring them to a s**tty, dirty paddock with horrible toilets and nowhere to sit. If he brings his missus and his kids with him they all need to be looked after, have somewhere nice to sit and enjoy a beverage or two. So I do understand what Youthstream are trying to do. There are definitely more sponsors involved now than in the past and that's definitely a good thing.

"With the tracks I think if they just ripped and watered them there'd be more lines. Sometime I'd like to see less work to create lines because if the tracks are left alone the lines will naturally create themselves. Liepore's a prime example. It's flat and fast on Saturday but by Sunday afternoon it's really not so smooth and there are a million and one lines."



Josh chases down Everts at Desertmartin in 2006



Josh rates his 2010 bike as being better than last year's factory Yamaha

On the downside I don't have the tag of being world champion and I can honestly say I lost about £200,000 in bonuses because of it all."

DBR: Okay, moving on... How's the new bike working out?

JC: "The bike's very good and a lot of people don't believe me when I say this year's Aprilia is better than last year's Yamaha. That's not tearing Yamaha down because they've made a big step forward from last year's bike to the 2010 model but the Aprilia is powerful, it's very fast and it's just some small things that we have issues with."

"It's a bloody good bike though and I think we're gonna surprise a lot of people this year. I'm passionate about the brand and the bike and it's not that I've gone there just to cruise around and to make some money – I've gone there because I think I can do a good job for them, surprise some people and have some fun."

DBR: You actually won here in Bulgaria last year with a 2-2 – can we expect to see you on the top of the podium here again?

JC: "No. I don't have the outright pace to battle with Tony, Max and David. For me to win a

grand prix this year it's gonna have to be somewhere like Lierop where it's more physical. I will have the pace for some very good results but realistically I don't think I'll have the pace to take an outright win. Whether that's me, the bike or my age I don't know – I do think it is possible to win but just not yet."

DBR: You just mentioned Cairoli, Nagl and Philippaerts – are they the guys you expect to battle for the MX1 championship this year?

JC: "Yeah but for me Cairoli is the guy. He's on the new 350 which is a bike he likes and he's already getting better starts than he did on the Yamaha last year when he was starting 10th and having to work his way up."

"So I think this year he's gonna start better, he'll use less energy and so that's why I think overall it has to be him. The only concern is an injury for him or possibly the bike will go bang at some point."

"Nagl will be up there too but he only wins races he holeshots – he's never won from an eighth place start or anything and that's why I've got to give it to Tony with Max second. David Philippaerts will be pretty strong this year also and he's been good pre-season but I think third is about his lot."

DBR: Have you considered what you'll do after racing?

JC: "The best case scenario for the future is this. I've always said I want to go back to New Zealand when I finish racing but as time goes on I'm getting more and more comfortable in the UK – my daughter and partner are English."

"Next year I want to race in Britain only and then look at moving into working within the industry in some way whether it be motocross or road racing – I'm a big fan of that sport and would love to work in those circles. I'm 99 per cent sure this will be my last year in GPs unless something miraculous happens. But, yeah, I definitely want to race in the UK next year and to try and add another title to the two I have."

DBR: After it's all done and dusted and you've retired when you look back on your career will you be happy enough?

JC: "I'm pumped with the way my career has gone. I've beaten great riders like Pichon and Everts in some big one-on-one battles – obviously not as much as they beat me – but I'm still pretty happy about the way everything has gone. I did come up against some really tough riders but I did beat them too and to me that's pretty cool."



ROAD FOOLS!

JC'S FUNNIEST ROAD TRIP
STORY – EVER...

"The funniest thing that ever happened at a GP was actually here in Bulgaria in 2007. We booked this hotel that I paid for in advance but when we got there it was like the biggest dump ever and the sort of place I wouldn't have let my dog sleep in. We knew where there was this other hotel with a spare room so we started driving over to it but we got lost in the middle of nowhere.

"Anyway, we came across this old lady – who must have been 90 at least – dragging a tree across the road. She was with this guy who had absolutely no teeth and was trying to speak to us. By the way he reacted I reckon he'd never heard anyone speak English. Then there was this other guy feeding a horse in a garden and it was just like we'd gone back 50 years.

"Lisa was with me and she was like 'don't open the window' and my cousin is in the back and he's just cracking up yelling 'it's Borat – that guy looks just like Borat' and he did have on what appeared to be a mankini. The whole situation had to be one of the funniest things ever, it was honestly just unbelievable but the mankini polished it off – I was just cracking up."

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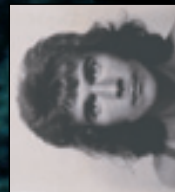
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was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera.
After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer,
magazine art director, photographer and part-time art
college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism.
Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words.
He never did get a proper job...

JACK BURNICLE is the godfather (our words, not his) of
British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to
Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan
Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid.
At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble',
and was instantly, hopelessly hooked. Next time he went he

NAMESAKES!

WHEN IT COMES TO CHOOSING A NAME FOR YOUR NIPPER, SPORTING HEROES CAN PROVIDE INSPIRATION – ESPECIALLY ONE WHO WON THE 1977 BRITISH 500 GP...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

Motorcycle racers often find themselves named after their parents' sporting heroes – sometimes with remarkable intuition. Six-time world motocross champion Joel Robert inspired many such monikers – even Rob Hooper's mum and dad's dog – but none was more appropriate than five-time world champ Joel Smets.

The habit also cross-pollinates into road racing and other sporting spheres. Ducati's Italian WSB challenger Michel Fabrizio has that unusual Christian name because he was named after French football legend Michel Platini. And former world supersport vice-champion Broc Parkes, a stocky Australian who won 44 amateur dirt-track titles, got his from multi US national MX champion Broc Glover.

A blond, blue-eyed schoolboy who finished second in the 2010 British SW85 supercross series, Scooter Webster inherited his entertaining name from a much lesser known American motocrosser called Scooter Stafford. And British MX1 champion Brad Anderson's dad Phil named his son after America's first ever world champion, Brad Lackey.

Phil was so impressed when he saw Lackey winning the British 500 GP in 1977 that he decided if he ever had a lad he'd call him Brad!

Brad Lackey hailed from Berkeley, Northern California. Born in July 1953, he began 'cow-trailing' as a nine-year-old through the mountains of the San Francisco Bay area with his dad and his dad's mates, riding a little Hodaka. At 13 he started scrambling and in 1968, when his elder brother Randy was sponsored by US Suzuki, a local shop owner backed Brad on a CZ. He tackled the national circuit in 1970 aged 17. A long-haired hippy child of the 'Summer of Love', he rode that season with a rubber 'peace dove' taped to his handlebars as a protest against the Vietnam War.

He also raced the winter Inter-AM and Trans-AM series against the world's best from across the Atlantic. "Those Europeans taught us that we needed to take our training much more seriously," he remembers. "I took that to heart. From the start I knew I wanted to go to Europe and compete against the top riders in the world."

It happened sooner than expected.

CZ invited Lackey to their training camp in Czechoslovakia and he rode six 250 GPs. He was 17, living alone in a shack with no electricity and bathing in a nearby creek for three months. But it only hardened Brad's world title resolve! When the AMA established the US 500cc Nationals in 1972 Brad won three early rounds for CZ, signed with Kawasaki and emerged as champion riding alongside Jammin' Jimmy Weinert in 'Team Acid Rock'!

Kawasaki wanted him to stay Stateside and run the number one plate in 1973 but Brad headed instead for the 500 GPs. With minimum support (Brad paid his own mechanic and spent his '72 winnings) he finished 13th as a 20-year-old rookie and still found time to win a couple of US 500 national rounds before signing with Husqvarna for 1974. He improved to 10th in the world and with Pomeroy, Weinert and Marty Tripes shocked the Europeans by finishing second to Sweden in the MX des! In 1975 he scored his first GP moto win in Luxembourg, upped his world ranking to sixth and married girlfriend Lori. The following year brought another moto win – at Ruskeasanta in Finland.

Jack Burnicle

Visual signature of writer
Signature of the author

Visual signature of wife
Signature of the wife

(6,337315)

DESCRIPTION SIGNALEMENT

★Wife Femme

Beater Titulaire

Occupation

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Place of birth

BILLINGHAM

Date of birth

9/2/53

Country of Residence

ENGLAND

Pays de Résidence

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LUNGING INTO THE LAST
LAP OF THE 1982
LUXEMBOURG 500 GP +
LACKEY HAS VROMANS
(4) IN HIS SIGHTS!



LACKEY HAS LOADS OF
FANS AT THE FINAL
ROUND OF 1982 IN
LUXEMBOURG!

entitled 'Motocross: Techniques, Training and Tactics'.

Noyce had lifted that 1979 title but an early-season injury sidelined the Englishman in 1980, clearing the way for a bitter feud between

Wiltshire and his ninth and last GP victory. His is a strange, unique record – he only won at five tracks (three times apiece at Farleigh and Sittendorf and three French GPs at different venues). Vromans responded at Namur and it was all down to the last round in Luxembourg again with Brad leading by four points!

In a fabulous first race contest, Lackey hounded Vromans until Andre wilted on the final lap and Brad surged through to snatch a vital second place behind the commanding Carlqvist. He then rode calmly to second overall (wearing a pair of gold Fox pants labelled 'Good as Gold'), crossing the line into a plume of champagne to become America's first world motocross champion. It had been a long, testing road for the bearded Californian. "But that's what motocross is all about to me," he insisted. "Making it hard. If it gets too easy, it's no challenge. No fun. I'd rather win the world championship one time than the US championship 10 times!"

Despite his success, Brad had caused terminal offence at Suzuki with his forceful, independent spirit. He'd acquired prominent personal sponsorship from Fox and French drinks giant Pernod and used Simons suspension and Metzeler tyres against the factory's wishes. So without a contract for '83 he astonished us all by doing what few champions are able to do and at 29 retired on top!

Brad Anderson has exhibited plenty of his namesake's rebellious fighting spirit during his own career but his untamed, wild riding style actually mirrors another of Phil Anderson's racing heroes, of whom more next month...

He also celebrated the arrival of daughter Lia and placed fifth in the world, just four points behind his pal Graham Noyce.

The Lackey family moved into a ranch outside Concord, California, that year along with cats, dogs and chickens and about 20 of his beloved Ford Mustangs! He was hired by Honda for 1977 and became the first American to win a 500 GP – at Farleigh Castle (where he inspired a watching Phil Anderson) – and moved up to fourth in the championship table. Retained by Honda in 1978, Lackey won the second round at Sittendorf in Austria, lost a tie-breaker to Heikki Mikkola in France and beat him at Farleigh, eventually clinching a strong second in the table to the Flying Finn.

Brad made a shock move to Kawasaki and their revolutionary new Uni-Trak monoshock system in 1979. He scored Kawasaki's maiden 500 grand prix victory at Thouars in France, lost a tie-breaker in Luxembourg's final round to his Honda replacement Andre Malherbe and finished fourth in the table, only four points off second! I supplied some photographs that year for a comprehensive, lavishly illustrated book Brad wrote with his wrench Steve Stasiefski, trainer Dean Miller and magazine editor Len Weed,

Malherbe and Lackey. Andre won the opening salvo, Brad the second (in Austria again) and Andre the third and they fought neck-and-neck throughout an enthralling season, reaching Luxembourg for the last two races separated by a single point. But with tension at boiling point the contest virtually ended in the first turn when they collided, the impact glancing Brad's Kawasaki into the fence. He stormed furiously through to fifth, spent the second moto trying to ram Malherbe off the track, inevitably missed, hit a tree and ended up a bruised and beaten 10th behind Irishman Laurence Spence!

Lackey then moved to Suzuki in 1981 and slipped to sixth behind team-mate Jean-Jacques Bruno while Malherbe, Noyce and Hakan Carlqvist (Yamaha) dominated proceedings. Malherbe also won the opening grand prix of '82 in France. It wasn't until the fifth round, in Austria, that Lackey triumphed – in a tie-breaker with his teenaged replacement at Kawasaki, Dave Thorpe. Malherbe retaliated in Italy and Germany but then broke his leg at Carlsbad, California. Lackey's new Suzuki team-mate Andre Vromans promptly won in Canada. Brad then ambushed another tie-break with Thorpe at Farleigh Castle to register his third success in

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PRO CIRCUIT

TIPS, TWEAKS AND TICKLES 2!

MORE TOP TECH TIPPERY-POKERY FROM OUR RESIDENT WRENCH

Words by Geoff Walker Photos by Suttly

For this month we here at DBR Tech HQ are going to drop a few more technical tips out there for you to mull over and maybe take to the garage to aid in the prep of

your factory machines. We all know how important the prep of your bike is and a few simple and easy to perform tips always come in handy.

001// I have a lot of people ask me about handlebar set-up and my advice is always to start with the handlebars in a fairly neutral position. If you are setting your bars just take some time to look from the side of your bike and try to set the bars in a line with the angle of the forks. The handlebar position is a personal thing but the bars at this angle will make the bike nice to steer and should ease the pressure on your arms. This is always a good position to start off with if you are not sure where you should be set.

002// For the second tip of this month we are staying up front with the grip position in relation to the handlebar set-up. If you use a half waffle style of grip you can use the groove pattern to help you stay set with your arm position when you ride. On the throttle side try setting your grip with the front edge of the first lip on the grip slightly downwards – this will allow you to grip the throttle side further round, allowing you to keep your right arm up a little further when riding. On the left side set the grip just down from level to encourage your arm to stay in a good attack position.

003// As we are up front we will check the levers. Try to run the levers at an angle which will be easy for your style of riding. A good angle on your levers will again ease the pressure on your arms. Sit on the bike and find a comfortable angle for your arms and set your levers accordingly.

004// Everyone's hands, feet and general bodily parts are a different size so it makes sense to adjust parts of your bike to suit your particulars. We all use our brakes a hell of a lot – or at least we all should use our brakes a hell of a lot – so you need to make sure they are set for optimum usage.

The rear brake pedal should be set to a level with the footpeg. If the pedal is set too high this could make you overheat the brake during racing by resting your foot on it and too low will make you stretch for the lever which is

not always easy in modern boots. If the lever is set level, the level of control is improved.

Similar rules apply to the front brake lever. I see some riders with the front brake lever set to where they have to really reach for it. This is not good as this reaching will cause fatigue and give you less power to hold on to your fire-breathing weapon of choice. Riders often think the lever needs to be further out to improve braking power. Basically if the brake doesn't work well enough to run the lever at the correct distance from the bars then you need to make the brake work better with some re-bleeding using quality brake fluid.

Set the lever so your fingers are hooking over in the middle section of your digits. You have total control of the lever and your hand will not fatigue as quickly. Do it!

005// Line it up... Always take a minute to make sure the front end of the bike is all running in a straight line. A KTM is a particular one to keep an eye on as the triple clamp design can allow the front end to slightly 'tweak' out of line. Stand up on the pegs and look over the front of the bike to make sure the front wheel is in line when you have the bars straight. If it isn't hold the front wheel between your legs, get hold of the bars and give it a 'tweak' back into place. If it is way out of line you will have to loosen the triple clamp fork pinch bolts to allow everything to realign more easily.

006// Tyre pressures are often overlooked which is madness as they are the final point of contact with the ground – this means they make a huge difference to your safety and therefore enjoyment of the day's riding. Just take a minute to check your pressures with a quality pressure gauge and get them right. In most cases try to run your tyre pressures at 12psi. This allows the tyre to mould into the ground and give a sufficient spread of rubber to the dirt to drive you forward and also allow you to ride hard through the turns. If the conditions are hard and stony then pressure up to 15psi to defend against punctures.

ENGINE	Part	Metric	Imperial	Notes
	Camshaft Chain Tensioner	12	1.0	(87 in lb)
	Cylinder Bolt	12	1.2	(106 in lb)
	Camshaft Cap Bolt	7.0	0.7	5.2
	Engine Oil Drain Plug	15	1.5	11
	Engine Oil Drain Plug	15	1.5	(87 in lb)
	Engine Oil Drain Plug (Water Pump Cover)	9.8	1.0	18
	Kick Pedal Pivot Bolt	25	2.5	37
		49	5.0	

- A. Adjusting Nut
- B. Locknut
- C. Spring Preload
- 20. Silencer Pipe Mounting Bolts
- 21. Silencer Cover Mounting Bolts
- 22. Rear Master Cylinder Mounting Bolts
- 23. Cylinder Head Bolts
- 24. Steering Head Bolts

- kgf.m
- 5.8
- 50
- 12
- 30. Kick Pedal Pivot Bolt
- 31. Clutch Cover Bolt
- 32. Engine Oil Drain Plug
- 33. Pump Cover Bolt



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BELATED THANKS!

WALKER'S TOUGH LUCK...

I want to drop in a massive thank you this month to Steve Ireland, Shirty Jnr and the Gas Gas UK crew who hooked Team DBR up for the Tough One back in February. The day was amazing as usual and the two fiddy Gasser provided by JS and the crew was, as it turned out, more up to the job than I was after rippin' my knee to pieces on the second lap. Thanks to all involved in the event from me. I was pretty depressed with the lack of result after last year's 12th place. Gutted doesn't come close...

BERGER KING!

SUTTY SAMPLES HUSABERG'S MIGHTY MEATY FE570 – A BIKE SO BIG AND BEEFY IT WEIGHS THE SAME AS 1000 FLAME-GRILLED QUARTER POUNDERS...

Words by **Sutty** Photos by **Andy Wiley**

Have you ever heard the saying 'there's no replacement for displacement' and wondered what the feck it means? Well in terms of physics it makes no sense at all – unless some kind of vacuum is involved and even then I can't totally get my head around it – but in the fast and furious world of muscle cars and drag racing it basically means that the more cubic capacity your engine has the better.

While more cubic inches might help a V8 Chevy go from point A to point B faster the same definitely doesn't hold true in the world of off-road motorcycle sport where handling and agility are equally if not more important than out and out horsepower – take a look at KTM's all-new 350cc MX1 missile that has been seriously kicking some 450 butt with Tony Cairoli onboard. That's not to say big, big-bore four-stroke machines are totally unsuitable for off-road use though and a couple of European manufacturers in particular are proving potentially adept at making 500cc-plus enduro race bikes that rule the roost.

Husaberg have a long history of specialising in big-bore four-bangers and while their earlier examples looked more agricultural than racy the Swedish brand turned that reputation around with some startling on-track success led by Joel Smets and Anders Eriksson who between them won no fewer than four world championships for the then relatively new manufacturer.

Unfortunately, race wins didn't translate to good sales and after hitting some financial difficulties the Husaberg brand was bought out by KTM in 1995 with the Austrians now building the production run while the race and development programmes are still very much of Swedish origin. A little known trivia fact is that KTM's 'Ready to Race' slogan was originally Husaberg's until the Austrians adopted it as their own – keep that little nugget safe for quiz night down at the boozer. But anyway I digress...

As I was saying Husaberg have a long and fruitful history of creating awesome four-strokes but it's their latest crop of FE enduro models – the 390, 450 and 570 – that look that little bit extra special with their innovative engine layout and exhaust system, EFI, topsy-turvy fuel tank/air box thingamy, polyethylene subframe and a whole heap of race engineered bits and bobs that all add up to make owning a 'Berg seem like a great idea.

Which brings me to the point of this here feature because between them KTM UK's Ross Walker and DBR's Tech Ed Geoff Walker decided that it might be a great idea to line me up with a FE570 for a long-term test. For the past few years I've concentrated on 'testing' 450cc motocross machines – a CRF450,

KXF450 and CMX450 – but with most of my racing now being of the hare and hounds variety it probably does make more sense to ride something a little more suited to true off-road going than an all-out fire-breathing MX missile. But c'mon guys – a 570?

While in theory a 570 sounds like a bit of a handful a quick flick back through the Sutton memory banks to the year of many a concussion – or 2004 as everybody else calls it – and the '05 model Husaberg launch at Preston Docks reminded me that the 550 was actually the stand-out bike of the bunch as all that lovely horsepower actually kept the bright yellow machine on top of the bumps and feeling deceptively light and flickaboutable in the horsepower-sapping sand. Of course that was in wide open motocross going – is it possible for a 570cc four-stroke to be as manageable and rider friendly on tight trails and woodland singletrack? There's only one way to find out...

The first thing that strikes you – or struck me if you prefer – when riding this bike is the weight or to be more precise the lack of it which comes as a wee surprise when you consider it's meant to be a big mean beastie of a bike. But weighing in at around 114kg it's actually the second lightest machine in its class and although a smidgeon heavier than KTM's EXC530 it's a good eight to 10 kilos less than the current crop of Japanese enduroised 450 MXers. But I reckon the light feel has more to do with the innovative engine design and more centralised mass that comes with it rather than any lack of actual bulk.

Motor wise there are no real surprises. The 565.5cc EFI-fed lump offers strong, tractable power and pulls real strong from down low – not snappy or arm-stretching, just lovely linear grunt. The mid and top-end aren't anywhere near as strong as the bottom – thank god! – but with six well-spread gears to go at it doesn't need to be either. The electric start works well and so far has been fault free which is how we like it especially seeing as though there's no kickstart to back up the 12 volt self-charging system.

At slow speeds the suspension is awesome but being a big old boy it's a little too soft for me in high-speed big-hit situations like you find at most hare and hound style events. I'm gonna try and get a better set-up with the clickers before forking out (geddit?) on stiffer springs or re-valving the WP units – I'll let you know how that works out next month when hopefully I'll have taken in a race or two. I personally find that nothing gets you used to how a bike behaves better than riding it when you're knackered and with my current level of fitness being lower than a joke about yer mamma I reckon I'm gonna get ample opportunity to do just that...



DBR TESTED

FOX RACING AWG RACEWEAR >>

One of the coolest things about off-road riding is the diversity of conditions encountered during a day's dabbling even when your dabbling is done in a relatively tame environment like Armthorpe's premier practice and race facility – FatCat Motoparc. With an awesome array of awesomely prepared tracks and trails as well as a super-tough extreme enduro course to go at there really is no better place to test bikes, parts or pimpin' riding kit.

That's why for my first run out on the 'Berg I decided to speed south down the M6 and M61, 'ead east across the M62 then drop down the M18 to Junction 4 to get some seriously sensual sessions in. Because I'm still carrying a little bit of Christmas bulk I cunningly dressed for this first ride of the year in some super-slimming all black All Weather Gear from Fox Racing which is suitably flattering for the more portly gentleman and from what I can figure from t'internet is reported to be tremendously tough, well waterproof and voraciously ventilated too.

And following a good three hours or so on – and off – the bike in a variety of conditions from dastardly deep mud puddles to extreme get-off-and-push hill climbs I can indeed report back that it is indeed all of the above. But the best bit of all is unlike some other companies' all-weather riding kit which is alarmingly fugly this Fox AWG get-up is actually pretty cool looking. The jacket in particular is casual enough to pop down the pub in while still being resilient enough to withstand the kind of 27-man bar brawl most Morecambe boozers are renowned for. So whether it's flying roost, branches or broken beer bottles that are bouncing off this kit's tough construction you're always gonna look pretty cool wearing it and that is pretty important too. In my opinion the pants are equally awesome – although some people may not like the over-the-boot look – and with their leather inner knee panels are also resistant to hot four-stroke exhausts which lessen the life of many other brands' all-weather riding pants considerably.

At approximately £280 for the set I reckon the price may put off some consumers but you really shouldn't let it. Like I said before this kit is built to last and in my opinion classically designed too so although it's not exactly bang on trend it will still look great year after year without becoming too dated.

Basically, if you're a serious off-road, enduro or trail rider I'd look at purchasing a set of AWG racewear as a long-term investment towards your own comfort – it really is worth it. So is it safe to say I'm impressed with Fox's AWG racewear? I sure am. In fact I almost bought the company...

Price: Jacket £159.99 Pants £119.99
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*Holy Moses! Parting the
Red Sea (or brown puddle)
Sutty stylee*



*For a big big-bore thumper the
Husaberg is incredibly well-mannered
in more technical going*

SMOKING WEAPON!

TWO LONG PRODS IS ALL IT TAKES TO GET SUTTY'S WEAPON FIRED RIGHT UP – MAKE OF THAT WHAT YOU WILL...

Words and photo by Sully

There's only one noise more pleasing to the ear than the throaty bark a Pro Circuit two-stroke silencer spits out – and that's the throaty bark the Shed of Dread's Pro Circuit silencer spits out when the perfectly jetted motor fires into life after sitting dormant for the past year-and-a-half.

Yup, that's right, after yet another month spent blagging, buying, tinkering, polishing, bleeding and admiring, the momentous occasion finally came and after priming the carb with unleaded pre-mix and giving the kickstart lever two firm prods with my Alpinestars-booted foot the SoD fired into life.

But way back before I could enjoy that pleasurable moment I had a whole heap of crappy jobs to wade through including the reworking of some bits I thought I'd done and dusted ages ago. After poring over the picture of the SoD in March's mag I decided I just had to do something about the rear brake pedal that despite being 100 per cent fully functional looked like a battered piece of crap. A surf of the world wide web to find a solution didn't help matters much and aside from splashing out over £70 on a brand new one from a Honda dealer I was all out of ideas until in a moment of brilliance I came up with a plan...

I don't know if any of you've ever noticed but KTM rear brake pedals have replaceable tips that simply bolt onto the lever – the big question was would one of them fit the CR? My new bessie mate Ross Walker at KTM UK supplied me with the tip's bolt hole dimensions and they seemed pretty darn close to the Honda's so I took the risk and splurged out a massive three quid on a brand new KTM part from D-3 Racing in Kendal plus an extra 50 pence on some self-tapping bolts from my local hardware store. After drilling out the rivets on the old SoD pedal the KTM tip just bolted straight on. It looks sweet and by fitting so perfectly saved me over 60 bones in the process. Nice!

Another mega cost saving this month came in the footpeg department. Decent aftermarket pegs for elderly bikes are a little thin on the ground so instead of searching and searching for some online, I blagged a pair of titanium Fro Systems Honda pegs for a brand-new CRF450 off Mark McCann who assured me that they wouldn't come close to fitting and so no doubt figured he'd be getting 'em right back. But nuh-uh! After a close look I figured that with the exception of an extra tab on the back they're essentially the same so with a little help from Marge's mate's dad I had them

re-machined and by adding some steel spacers they slotted right into the hangers. Result!

With Bobby Dazzler pegs and a new brake pedal fitted I was pumped to get the rest of the controls sorted too. After fitting a pair of Windham bend Twinwalls to the triple clamps I also slipped on a Sunline ARC clutch lever and perch left over from a previous project and a pair of dual compound Renthal grips. The pairing up of the Sunline ARC lever and the Venhill Featherlite cable makes for a very nice feeling clutch and that's something that makes me happy.

The RG3-tuned forks make me happy too and after I'd slipped 'em straight into the clamps I just had to whack the front wheel in 'n'all. Like I said t'other month, the Central Wheel Company have done a mega job on the SoD's hoops and I just couldnae wait to get them bolted in to see how cool they'd look. Next to the hard anodizing of the forks' lower legs the wheels look simply awesome.

The front brake was next in line to be fitted and once in place could be bled as well. I was a little worried that the brakes would be a pig to bleed but after following the well tried and tested clear-tube-on-nipple procedure the Motul DOT 5.1 fluid was soon squirtin' out with not a bubble of air in sight. The rear anchor bled up quite quickly too and so all was good in the braking 'hood as well.

With everything in place bar the finishing touches – plastic fitment, chain fitment, kill switch fitment and the fitment of some other bits and bobs that I wasn't quite ready to get around to just yet – I looked to see what job was next on the list. MXM have agreed to sticker up the beast so I boxed up all the new plastics and old fuel tank and seat so they could be sent off but before taping the box shut and sending it off to the North East I borrowed back the petrol tank, poured in a little pre-mix, rested it onto the steel frame's backbone and then hooked up the hose to the carb.

After giving the juice a moment or two to work its way into the Keihin's vacuous float bowl the time had come to give the kickstart lever a good prod to see if we could get this party started. Two of those later and the SoD was ticking over on choke quite nicely until it was warm enough to give the throttle a good hard blip, filling the passageway at work with a sweet strawberry smelling blast of bright blue two-stroke smoke and the sort of echoey MX-bike bark normally only ever heard in supercross arenas. Awesome!



ROLL OF HONOUR!

BIG THANKS TO THE COMPANIES WHO HAVE HELPED MAKE THIS PROJECT POSSIBLE – SO FAR...

In alphabetical order I'd like to thank the ever-growing list of following companies in a URL stylee –
Apico.co.uk, Central-wheel.co.uk, D-3racing.com, Demon-tweeks.co.uk, Docwob.com, EBCbrakes.com, Garricksurfacecoatings.co.uk, Frosystems.com, KTM.co.uk, MDRacingproducts.co.uk, Motocrossworld.com, MSRacing.co.uk, Muc-off.com, MXM.co.uk, Racefx.co.uk, Renthal.com, RG3London.co.uk, Pro-circuit-racing.co.uk, Pulse-racing-products.com and last but not least Venhill.co.uk. Without help from these awesome companies and the people who work for them the SoD would still be far from complete. So thank you all – I really appreciate it.





"Nylon" Hoody. Part of the Spring 2010 casual range from ONE Industries
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PC SUPERSTAR!

WORLD RECORD DISTANCE JUMPING, LEAPING UP – AND OFF – LAS VEGAS' ARC DE TRIOMPHE AND BACKFLIPPING TOWER BRIDGE! ROBBIE MADDISON HAS FOUND FAME, FORTUNE AND MILLIONS OF INTERNET FANS DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE...

Words and photos by JP O'Connell

When Robbie Maddison was three years old his dad bought him a QR50. He broke the frame jumping the little Honda. Talk about a taste of things to come...

Next up was a more robust KX60 and by the age of six Robbie's racing career had begun. For the next 10 years every weekend was spent at the races with his family, meeting lots of good people and banging bars with the likes of Aaron Gobert, Jay Marmont and Chad Reed.

"Obviously Chad is the most famous of the three of us but growing up racing the 80s we had some good battles," recalls Maddo. "In fact when I was 16 I won the New South Wales championships beating Reed into second. I suited that 80 really well but once I was forced up onto the 125cc I really struggled. I wasn't very big – growing up I was always the runt of the litter – whereas Chad was like a foot taller than me and got on well with it. I had the talent – I could jump everything they were, I just couldn't muscle the bike through the corners."

Being used to winning everything, it came as a bitter pill to swallow to suddenly be out of contention and the decision was made to take a break from motocross rather than keep on throwing money at it.

"Dad's advice was to say that I was an adult now and he suggested I think about getting myself a trade. So I went out and signed on for a four-year apprenticeship as a sparky, sold my bikes and gear and got into competition surfing and other stuff that I couldn't do when I was riding motocross."

But before Maddo even had the chance to wire a plug a bacterial infection – picked up while jet skiing – put the kibosh on all of his future plans. After falling sick it was discovered that he had contracted both encephalitis and meningitis which shut down all the major organs in his body, caused paralysis and left him on life support. The prognosis was bad and his parents signed over the rights of his body to the hospital, leaving doctors free to do whatever they thought was necessary to save him.

"I was booked in to have the top of my skull removed to relieve the pressure. But luckily the medication brought it down

in the lead up to the op. I suffered brain trauma, memory loss, weight loss, the left and right side of my body were uncoordinated – I was told I would have double vision for up to six years. I had two months in hospital and spent every minute practising my eye exercises. By the time I got out it was back!"

After eight months of recovery it was back to life as a sparky. Within a year he'd saved enough money to buy his first house and within two years he'd bought a trail bike which he went out on every weekend with his dad.

"I would find myself looking for jumps, doing tricks and within six months I chopped in the trail bike for a dirt bike. Freestyle was just starting to take off and I went to watch the Crusty Demons Show in Sydney. The big names like Deegan,

Twitch and Faisst were riding plus a couple of guys I grew up racing with. I used to race and beat those two guys and I thought 'man, if they can do it then I can do it' because I used to kick their asses! I left that show totally inspired thinking that I was going to learn those tricks. I had this energy in me and I knew I wanted to get into freestyle so I'd spend all week on the tools then at the weekends try to bludge people's ramps to practice on."

Despite growing in stature and 'fitting' the bike properly, returning to racing never really became a serious option. Having beaten the best in the past and with Reed now racing in Europe it would have been a long, hard road with no guarantees ahead.

"I just couldn't see how it would happen, whereas in freestyle I saw something I wanted to just go out and do. I would see pics of people doing something like a Hart Attack and I'd be thinking 'man, how are they doing that?'. It just looked awesome and I wanted to get a photo of myself doing that, that was my goal. I went out and started doing a few tricks like a Superman seat grab with someone videoing it, then I'd play/pause it. Man, I'd nearly jerk off over it!"

"I mean at this point in time I wasn't thinking I'd become a freestyle motocrosser, move to America and walk away from this lifestyle. I just wanted to pull off these tricks for bragging rights down the pub!"

With his friends telling him how good he was, Maddo

>>

was persuaded to enter an amateur freestyle competition which he promptly won. Within a week he had pulled and landed a backflip so at the next freestyle event he entered as a pro, won and earned himself the King of Oz '03 title.

From watching the top FMX guys at work Maddo was able to learn the tricks and eventually begin inventing his own as well as coming up with new variations on backflips and underflips.

"I think the best of these come about when you're not thinking about it. When you let your energy take over, when you let the soul of it take over magical things can happen.

"The pressure is always there to invent a new trick – TV, fans, sponsors all want to see it and each rider wants to think they can go out and do it. It's an evolutionary thing, you know one trick leads into another. After the backflip people were like 'what more can you possibly do on a motorcycle?', now we're seeing seat double grab Hart Attack backflips, both hands holding onto the seat upside down. It's amazing. To see Jeremy Lusk pull that off at X Games was sick, he believed in himself enough to do it.

"There's things, yet to be done, that I can picture in my mind that are possible, there's room for me to grow. I'll only ever get out what I put in. It's a confidence thing – before you can take the risk to try something new you really have to have the confidence that you can do it before you try. I think that confidence comes from the training, nutrition and dedication to it – if you give everything to wanting to achieve something it magically happens."

The downside for the riders is that the new tricks will inevitably be more risky and dangerous than their predecessors. It's not a difficult equation to work out. Backflip becomes double backflip becomes frontflip and so on. The level is constantly being upped and unsurprisingly this can play on the riders' minds.

"The pressure for me is immense," admits Maddo. "I've jumped a football field, the Arc de Triomphe, Tower Bridge and I feel that I have raised the bar to keep my name at the forefront of freestyle motocross. I don't want to succumb to the pressures of people wanting me to perform, I want to be performing for myself. I've just taken a couple of months off because I needed a break but I'm refreshed now – unfortunately this injury is keeping me off the

bike and I'm anxious that I'm a bit behind."

Injury? What injury would that be? Robbie looks ever so slightly sheepish as one of the world's top freestylers rolls up his trouser leg to reveal a tasty cut and haematoma, explaining that he took a tumble off the balcony of a boat while on his stag do and is lucky to be alive!

"I want to come out this year and do my normal freestyle run with the body varial in it, put together the ultimate run. I'm going to leave the double flip alone because I just don't want to take that risk, just slightly wrong and it could take your life. Ask Cameron Sinclair – he's so lucky to be back on a bike."

As seems to so often be the way, life gets more precious the older you get and things that seemed an excellent idea 15 years ago suddenly don't appear so attractive as your self-preservation instinct kicks in. But to keep at the top of his game Maddo has enrolled with Ryan Hughes to prepare himself both physically and mentally for the upcoming season.

"I want to be as fit as a motocrosser, I want to be able to ride a half-hour moto so I can go out with the confidence that I can nail a two-minute freestyle run. Yes, the tracks are physical but a lot of freestyle is mental – one of the hardest things is remembering to breathe. You're always thinking ahead. 'I want to do this so I need to set up like this.' Guaranteed you'll get to the corner, forget to breathe, come off the ramp, do a trick and suddenly suck in a massive gulp of air. Okay, so now the trick's messed up – halfway through a dead sailor cocking up your run. Now your mind kicks in going 'you loser!' and everything is out of the window!

"Last year I started working with Ryan and saw myself go from a fifth-placed guy to being dominant. Unfortunately some business things went pear-shaped for me and my mind started beating me. I was killing it at the start of the year then went to London and lost the freakin' world championship – it was tough to swallow and that's why I needed a break."

© Jörg MitterRed Bull Photofiles



"The pressure is always there to invent a new trick – TV, fans, sponsors all want to see it and each rider wants to think they can go out and do it..."

SUPERSTAR

Robbie relaxes at his home in California



Backflipping Tower Bridge made headlines worldwide...

FLIP CHERRY!

POPPING IT TO DIRT...

"I had a video tape of Mike Metzger doing a flip to flip at the '02 Gravity Games and honestly it just made the hairs on the back of my neck stand up," remembers Robbie. "My first backflip attempt was to dirt as I didn't have a foam pit, I just wanted to do it and I believed in myself. If you want to do the flip you have to overcome the fear of it mentally and understand what it asks of you physically to be able to do it. I think I understood what it took – either that or I was just stupid enough to think I knew! I'd done flips into water on my BMX so I knew the feeling, knew I had to look back and commit. I also did a bit of breakdancing and could backflip from a standstill so I knew to just huck it back and hold on."

STAR!

...as did Maddo's 322ft world record long jump on New Year's Eve '07

PC SUPE



Now feeling fit and raring to go – barring the unfortunate leg injury – Robbie's short-term goals are simple. Keep performing to keep the sponsors happy and to regain the long jump world record that currently resides with Ryan Capes.

The long jump record was the inspiration behind Maddison's '07 New Year's Eve football field jump. Capes held the record at 310 feet and Robbie decided that a figure of 360 feet – the length of a football pitch – would be achievable.

"I went to Red Bull with the idea, they liked it and they put together the whole New Year's Eve thing when I got the record back with a jump of 322 feet and seven inches. Capes got a bit of a s**t on that I won it in 'his' country and decided he was going to try to win it back in Australia. Crusty Demons got to hear of this and a three-way shoot-out was arranged between myself, Capes and Seth Enslow. On my first practice run I nailed it, hit the take off ramp at 107mph and jumped 378 feet!

"Come the night show and the jump 'proper' the weather closed in and as my bike was so highly tuned it started running like s**t! I knew that there was no way I was going to let him beat me and on my third jump I got 351 feet and a new official record. Capes took three months to beat the jump that took me one day to get. I know I'm a better rider than him, I try to be humble but at the end of the day it's our job, it is what it is and I'm a better rider than Capes and I'm gonna get the world records! Ha ha!"

After the success of the 2007 New Year's Eve jump that went out on live TV it was decided that another stunt would be set up for New Year's Eve '08 and again Red Bull stepped up to the plate, helping to organise the Arc de Triomphe jump that took place outside the Paris Hotel in Las Vegas.

"It was sickening, the whole mental side of it was just sickening," admits Maddo. "I remember driving to the Red Bull compound to look at the practice ramp for the first time. I could see this

10 storey metal structure above the trees and I was honestly almost s**tting myself. The first time I went to the top of the landing platform I was looking down thinking 'I've got to jump up here'. I dropped to my knees and threw up, the pressure was immense."

Once the jump was built for real in Vegas the decision was taken to make the landing ramp shorter – Robbie had never touched the top third in all of his practice jumps – so that the jump had more of a visual impact and people wouldn't be thinking he only had to drop a couple of feet from the top.

"Once the section of ramp was removed it left a flat deck and a knuckle and I was already thinking that if I hit that knuckle halfway down then I'd be dead and that's what made me overshoot! I'd stepped off that roof perfectly 10 times in practice. I was circling at the top with a totally clear mind – that's what got me up there and that's what got me off. Trouble is, when I was about six feet from the edge a solitary >>

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Lyng, Norfolk
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Foxhill, Swindon
MX1 / MX2 / MX2

Round 6

15 August
Farleigh Castle
MX1 / MX2 / Vets

Round 7

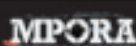
29 August
Silverstone
MX1 / MX2 / MX2

Round 8

3 October
Hawkstone Park
MX1 / MX2 / Vets

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thought popped in – ‘you’re going too slow’ – and I gave it a little *braap*. That little *braap* only pushed me out about two to three feet but with a 60 degree angle that’s a long drop! To be honest that was probably the best part for most people as it made them realise how gnarly it really was.”

After the Triomphe jump and early success in '09 with a win at the Calgary X Fighters it was back to the crazy stuff that he loves when Maddo got together with Red Bull's Katie Holt and managed to persuade someone high up in London that it was a good idea to let him backflip across an open Tower Bridge.

“I personally love the fact I jumped Tower Bridge – no-one else has done it and I love London. Katie Holt personally took control of everything, she told me after the jump that if it had gone wrong she could have ended up in

prison! There have been some people who have really believed in me – ESPN's Joan Lynch is another. I was on crutches when I first met her and she's asking me if I can really jump a football pitch!”

Robbie wants to show me his practice ramps and landings but after heavy rain there's a lot of wash off which he decides to fix with his new mini CAT. I stand back and watch as he attacks the course like it's a freestyle run. Strangely, the CAT isn't as agile as his YZ and as Maddo tries to scrape back down a rather steep slope gravity kicks in and I watch in horror as the CAT tips over backwards, wedging itself on its arse with the front facing the sky. Moments later the silence is broken as Maddo's head pops out the front. “F**k me that was close, whoa man!”

By the time Robbie is out and we have called

in reinforcements to rescue the CAT it's time for me to be on my way but not before Maddo fills me in on his plans for the future.

“First things first, my fiancée Amy and I are getting married in Australia in March. After that I want to get fit, put it all together and win the X Fighters championship, do well at the X Games and do a couple more long distance jumps.

“In the long term I see us moving back to Oz. I'd eventually like to join the V8 Supercar racing. It's all about showing these guys that you can do the business – I know how to drive a car well and have a good racing background. I have some unattended business in motorcycling I want to tend to first but I see a bright future in car racing. I beat Travis Pastrana at go karting the other day – he did have a broken collarbone but a win's a win, hey!”



“The first time I went to the top of the landing platform I threw up – the pressure was immense”

GREATEST HITS!

MADDO'S YOUTUBE TOP 3

The age of the internet has played an undeniable part in Maddo's success and his three biggest Red Bull-posted films on Youtube have pulled in close to six million hits. And the numbers are still rising...

www.youtube.com/watch?v=NL8Vj-Xe7DM
www.youtube.com/watch?v=MLEjkyXbJlc
www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcfkKtZd8tc



THE FIRST SX!

IN ITS 39-YEAR HISTORY THE DAYTONA SUPERCROSS HAS ESTABLISHED A REPUTATION AS BEING THE TOUGHEST, HARDEST, DOWNRIGHT GNARLIEST RACE ON THE SX CALENDAR...

Daytona. Just that word sends shivers down the spines of some of today's top supercross racers. It's one thing to last 20 laps on a mostly smooth, rhythm-filled track in a stadium. It's another thing to ride supercross suspension (stiff!) on what can amount to an outdoor track, only gnarlier. And then do that for 20 laps – adding up to well over 20 minutes of full-on exertion.

There are quite a few things that set the Daytona Supercross apart but perhaps the most ironic is that the event is so unlike other supercrosses yet it is the original SX race.

Chad Reed's got what it takes
to win the Daytona SX – a race
so gnarly you need outdoor
qualities to succeed



Racer X's editors at large. He knows the sport and its personalities like
few others and as our US Editor provides insight straight from the
Stateside scene...

Steve Cox is an American moto-journalist who follows the entire AMA
SXMX tour. Since moving on from US weekly Cycle News he's struck
out on his own to do the freelance thing and recently became one of

STATESIDE

GRASSY ASS (STARTS)

It's always been a bit odd to have a grass starting line at Daytona but it was never much of an issue until the race moved to the night. At night in Florida you get a dew that collects on the grass and it can get downright slippery. Case in point, James Stewart in 2009.

At the time of his infamous crash that took out much of the field – including ending Michael Byrne's SX season – Stewart's explanation was plausible. He said he wheeled all the way down the start straight and his front wheel never touched the ground so when he got on the binders his front wheel was a bit turned and he immediately washed out on the slippery grass and hit the rest of the riders like a bowling ball.

"I think that was just an excuse," says Brit 'Scuba' Steve Clarke, who has raced at Daytona two years in a row. "If you're a motocross rider you can ride on grass. A lot of the tracks in Europe that I rode as a kid were grass starts into grass turns and then the track got churned up after practice. A lot of the tracks I used to race were just a grass field with some bumps on it. That's good old motocross. They didn't have tilled-up first turns when motocross originated. They rode off-road which was grass, gravel, dirt, mud...whatever. I think it's good to throw a couple of grass first turns in there and a couple of concrete starts. Make it different because if you're a good rider you can ride anything – and you can obviously ride a grass turn."

The grass is unique to Daytona, though, that's for certain.

"The grass was interesting and they thought about tearing it up but I thought how cool it was that they got

to ride on grass," says Gary 'The Professor' Bailey, who built the Daytona Supercross track for 34 years, beginning at year one. "Starting 40 bikes and sending that many guys into the first turn, in the grass, that was crazy sometimes."

But who doesn't drive by a golf course and fantasise about tearing up all the grass on his dirt bike? The pros get a chance to do that every year to the infield of Daytona International Speedway.

RC/STANTON/REED

There are certain names that are almost synonymous with Daytona. First, there's Ricky Carmichael and there's also Jeff Stanton. Over the history of the event generally the Daytona Supercross track tends to favour outdoor specialists or just generally very fit riders – who tend to be outdoor specialists. Mike Kiedrowski won Daytona more times than all of the other supercrosses he won combined.

So why is Chad Reed on the list?

Well, he's gnarly. Think back to 2005 when Reed led the then-unstoppable Ricky Carmichael for the whole race – both on two-strokes – until Carmichael threw it away trying to keep the pace...

"That race in 2005 means so many things to me because it was a race that I felt that I really, truly rode to my full potential," Reed says. "It was a race that I enjoy. I've never finished off the podium there. Going into that weekend I was just really motivated and quietly confident. Ricky was talking it up a lot saying that Daytona always went to the baddest, strongest dude and I remember thinking 'okay, let's see then...'

"I did an interview on the radio or TV that week and [David] Bailey and RJ [Rick Johnson] were on the show with Dave Despain and I did a call-in and I remember saying some pretty strong words. I said I was ready for the weekend and I was ready to take it to him and I remember RJ and Bailey going 'whoa – do you really think you can beat RC at Daytona?' and I was like 'yeah – I'm not coming to finish second, I want to win, I want to beat Ricky Carmichael at Daytona!'"

Carmichael went down and slid up onto the asphalt in his crash.

"Yeah, he wanted to go NASCAR racing before he had really thought about it," laughs Reed.

Reed had only raced Carmichael one other time at Daytona prior to 2005. It was in Reed's rookie year in 2003 and he finished a close second to RC when everyone else seemed to be finishing a very distant second to RC.

"I guess I learned a lot from '03 and I got to race with Ricky and with everything that I learned from racing with him that year I knew I could do it. No-one was even close to him before that but I kept him in sight and it was my first year in the 250cc class. So I knew he was fast and I could work on my speed. I came back to win in 2004 but Ricky wasn't racing so it came down to 2005 and I did it. I led pretty much the whole race and had him on my tail the whole time and then with about six laps to go I started pulling away and the next thing I knew my pit board went from five seconds to 20 seconds so I figured that he ate s**t."

Daytona is special not just because it's different but because it's hard.



The gate drops on the 2009 450cc Main Event – moments later it was carnage...



Jimmy Ellis (#18) and Mark Barnett (#24) fight it out into the first turn back in 1980
© Jim Gianatsis



Mike Alessi holeshots last year – with a little help from James Stewart...



Ricky Carmichael excelled at Daytona – but Chad Reed got the better of him in an epic 2005 encounter back when they were both on two-strokes

DAYTONA SX



First turn 2009 and James Stewart goes bowling with the pack



Davi Millsaps whips his 250F back in 2006



Marty Trips grabs the holeshot in 1980 in front of 50,000 fans
© Jim Gianatsis





Chad Reed – aka the Mud Monster – walks away from his stricken bike in 2008. He was leading with two turns to go when it died...



Kevin Windham's also got the cojones needed to win at Daytona

A rider's view of the infamous grass start straight



"Daytona's just gnarly because it seems like it's pretty natural and they make everything out of sand and flat dirt – with a little bit of clay but not a whole lot – and it just gets brutal out there," Reed says. "It's tough. You've just got to have that mentality where you can attack it but you can't go after it too hard because you'll get hurt. You have to have a really purposeful attack. I think that's why I enjoy it so much which is because you still have to let it hang out and ride it like an outdoor track but you still have to finesse it a little bit like you do in supercross."

GARY BAILEY

As mentioned earlier, Gary Bailey – father of motocross legend David Bailey – was 'the man' for nearly three-and-a-half decades when it came to designing and building the Daytona Supercross and he was still racing when the race came together.

"I was racing the Winter Am series in Florida and Bill France [the owner of NASCAR and the Daytona International Speedway at the time] showed up at one of the Winter Am races and was looking for some assistance on a motocross event there at Daytona International Speedway," Bailey explains. "My brother and I had done the one in California at Ascot Park so we went over there and looked at some different options. So, nowadays it's run up in the front by the tri-oval but the first year we did it in the International Horseshoe in the infield to preserve the other grass."

The first year the race wasn't even run in the tri-oval where it's famously run today. Instead, the track builders and owners built the track over on the

International Horseshoe – part of the road racing track – complete with jumps over the guardrails and a jump over a drainage ditch.

"We even had a chicken line because we weren't sure if everyone would jump the drainage ditch," Bailey says. "So we had a line that went around the jump but was a lot slower. Everybody jumped it."

And while you may think that grass holds its water, Bailey was surprised by the dust at the first-ever running of the event. Having started building tracks at Ascot Park in southern California he didn't know how other types of dirt handled water. All he knew was that the clay at Ascot turned to grease when it was watered and he wanted to avoid that at Daytona.

"The first nightmare was that we saw the grass and we had sand and we knew both of those should hold water so we didn't really prepare for watering the track much. And when practice first started there was a hug cloud of dust because we didn't know how much to put on it. At Ascot Park if you watered it, it just turned to grease so we didn't bother much but it was dusty as could be."

Still, it wasn't long before Daytona evolved into a gruelling race – especially for the toughest of racers – and that's how Bailey liked it. "As I thought about it through the years I didn't want to make a cookie-cutter track," Bailey says. "That was one thing that I was adamant that I never wanted to do. I wanted Daytona to stand out. It had a reputation for being rough and for separating the men from the boys."

And the varying elements of Daytona still keep it standing out from the crowd, even going into its 40th anniversary event which will happen in 2011.

BRITS

Grass starts? Occasional mudders? You have to figure that Brits would love the Daytona circuit. However, probably the most experienced Daytona-racing Brit on the circuit – Steven Clarke – disagrees.

"Well, I don't really like Daytona for supercross," Clarke says. "I don't think it should be a supercross race. They should make it a little longer and make it an outdoor race because supercross normally is in a dome or stadium and has clay dirt and big jumps and stuff. Daytona's kind of stupid because your suspension's all set up stiff for normal supercross and, as a privateer, it's hard to switch out your suspension for more outdoor-type stuff. The track itself is good but I just think it's at the wrong time. They should do it for outdoors when everyone has suspension that works for that."

Occasionally the Daytona Supercross is muddy but there were two times in its history when it was past muddy and was more like a jet-ski race. The first time was in 1987 when Rick Ryan became the first (and only) privateer ever to win a 250cc (now 450cc) Supercross event.

However, the second one – only two years ago – was absolutely ridiculous. Even though the Main Event was cut back to 12 laps, more than half the field failed to finish including the guy who led the entire race up until two turns from the finish – Chad Reed. His bike gave up the ghost and it took nearly a minute for Kevin Windham to catch and pass Reed for the lead and the win.



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LITTLE BEAUTY!

MAX IS GETTING READY FOR HIS RACING COMEBACK BUT FIRST THERE'S JUST TIME TO NIP TO VEGAS WHERE HIS BABY SIS TAKES CENTRE STAGE...

Words by MAX ANSTIE Photo by JP O'CONNELL

So I'm healing up well and have been riding my dad's 450 a bit. I should be getting my release from the docs tomorrow so that I can start training on my race bike again.

So while I have had some time off I have been doing loads of school work so I can get my American Diploma which is the equivalent to GCSEs. The AMA made a rule that if you're under 18 you have to be enrolled in an American school.

So as well as all that fun, last weekend we went up to Vegas so my little sister Zoey could compete in a beauty pageant. The pageant was being filmed for 'Toddlers and Tiaras', an American TV show. We arrived in Vegas knowing my six-month-old sister was the prettiest baby since, well, I popped out 16 years ago! I went and got myself a suit from

Boss, then I was ready for the catwalk with my sis.

Saturday morning rolled around and we were ready to go. The fans lined up in their droves to see Princess Zoey and all of a sudden it was our turn to show the judges our skills. Unfortunately, Zoey fell asleep about five minutes before we were on stage so after being abruptly awoken when I held her up in her pretty pink dress and all the lights were on her, she was really grumpy and boo'd her eyes out. After our disappointing dress appearance Zoey quickly changed into her super sparkly swimsuit for the next competition. We regrouped and on stage smoked all the other little babies to eventually take home the Swimsuit Princess crown (all thanks to her big bro Max)!

With Zoey all done for the day it was down to me

to judge the Teen Princesses and quite frankly I gave them all a 10! Watch out for Zoey on Nickelodeon – she is the next Hannah Montana!

Having a break since A3 was good for me. It's been six weeks now and it's time to get ready for Seattle which is round seven of the AMA Lites West SX series. The weekend after that is Salt Lake and that runs us into Vegas for the East-West shootout.

I'm stronger than before and have had time to concentrate on different things. I have sorted a few things out with having the right people around me and minimal distractions. All my plans and training is falling into place, I'm going to be back on the gas very soon and ready to get on the podium for the last three supercross races.

Max

With the season ticking down the Supercross title fight is a two-way thing between Ryan Villopoto (#2) and Ryan Dungey (#5)



RYAN vs RYAN

IT'S DUNGEY AGAINST VILLOPOTO AS A DEPLETED SUPERCROSS CLASS RACE INTO THE CLOSING STAGES OF THE 2010 SERIES...

The contenders are dropping like flies in the AMA Supercross series with the exception of a couple of Ryans – Dungey and Villopoto. First, it was Monster Energy Kawasaki's Chad Reed dropping out with a broken hand, followed by San Manuel Yamaha's defending champ James Stewart bowing out of the title chase with a fractured wrist.

Numerous others have fallen since, including Honda Red Bull Racing's Andrew Short and most recently Stewart's title-contending team-mate Josh Hill has fallen off the pace with his own set of injuries.

As the series heads to Florida for the classic Daytona Supercross by Honda, Rockstar/Makita Suzuki's Dungey leads the title chase by a full 23 points over Villopoto but knowing that Villopoto is essentially an outdoor specialist – and that Daytona is essentially an outdoor track – things aren't looking so promising for Dungey to maintain such a lead through the one-off event. And it looks even worse when Villopoto's team-mate Chad Reed shows up to ride practice and sets the fastest time before bowing out of the competition due to a freshly fractured thumb.

Things look even grimmer for Dungey when Villopoto

grabs the holeshot to start the Main Event over Hill, who's racing with fractured ribs, Dungey, Short's fill-in at Honda Trey Canard, Monster Energy Kawasaki's Nick Wey in his last fill-in ride for Reed and the rest of the field.

Villopoto immediately begins to put a gap on the field as Hill does his best to hold off Dungey for third but by lap three Dungey finds the spot and goes by Hill and into second. By that time, though, the race for the lead is over. Throughout the remaining 17 laps the lead grows for Villopoto, then shrinks, then grows again as the two Ryans play yo-yo with the lead gap. On lap five Canard finds his way by Hill for third and that's how the podium rounds out. Villopoto takes the win over Dungey and then Canard who grabs his second podium finish in a row in only his third 450cc race.

With the points lead now narrowed down to 20 heading into Toronto it seems that Villopoto can control his own destiny – all he has to do is win every race from here on out and he'll be the champion.

In Toronto a redhead gets the holeshot – but this time it's Canard. He holds off Villopoto for a little over a lap-and-a-half before Villopoto takes the lead and then it's Dungey's turn to try and find a way around the

speedy fill-in. It takes Dungey almost five laps to get by Canard and at that point Canard actually lets him through in the sand section of the track. Canard is spent trying to keep up with Villopoto and Dungey on the slick track and he fades back pretty quickly, even though he maintains third easily for the rest of the race.

Out front Villopoto keeps Dungey from gaining on him for the remainder of the race. After Villopoto takes the win, dropping Dungey's points lead down to 17, Dungey and the Suzuki squad are heard accusing Canard of trying to help Villopoto – apparently forgetting the final race of the 2008 Lites East series when Canard put Villopoto into the finish-line scaffolding in order to win the race and the title. It's doubtful that having red hair is enough for these two to let bygones be bygones.

The series then heads to Dallas for a race at a venue that cost more than a billion dollars – Cowboys Stadium. With a 160 foot wide, two-sided television mounted to the roof, fans really can't be blamed for watching the race on the giant TV in front of them rather than just looking down at the stadium floor and watching it as it happens.

In the Main Event, Dungey finally puts a start together and takes the lead over Hill, Honda Red Bull



SERIES STANDINGS

SUPERCROSS >>

1	Ryan Dungey	261
2	Ryan Villopoto	240
3	Josh Hill	206
4	Davi Millsaps	189
5	Kevin Windham	179
6	Justin Brayton	164
7	Ivan Tedesco	159
8	Nick Wey	131
9	Kyle Chisholm	115
10	Tommy Hahn	113

LITES EAST >>

1	Christophe Pourcel	134
2	Austin Stroupe	126
3	Justin Barcia	102
4	Brett Metcalfe	95
5	Blake Baggett	80
6	Ryan Sipes	77
7	Dean Wilson	71
8	Kyle Cunningham	54
9	Martin Davalos	49
10	Troy Adams	47
19	Adam Chatfield	32
20	Steven Clarke	27



Since his spell inside Jason Lawrence has failed to make an impression on the Supercross class



Honda's 450 fill-in Trey Canard has strung together five podium finishes on the bounce

Racing's Davi Millsaps, TiLube/Brown Motorsports Kawasaki's Nick Wey, JGR/Toyota Yamaha's Justin Brayton and the rest of the field. Canard starts at the tail end of the top 10 and Villopoto starts behind him. By the end of the first lap Canard sits sixth and Villopoto sits 10th.

Both the redheads begin moving forward and at the halfway point Canard successfully moves by Hill and into third, then begins to track down his temporary team-mate Davi Millsaps. From lap seven Villopoto's rise to the top stalls when he gets hung up behind Brayton who's running fifth.

Canard gains on Millsaps and attempts a few passes in the last few laps but it's obvious he is being polite because he refuses to make contact with his team-mate and the two finish in second and third behind Dungey. As for Villopoto, he's not so nice and with two laps to go he slams Brayton to take what ends up being the fourth position as the pair had both passed the injured Hill earlier in the race.

All of a sudden the points lead is larger than it was even before Villopoto's horrible Atlanta debacle, sitting

at 24 points with one race left before the series goes on Easter break for one whole weekend.

Villopoto knows he has to win in Jacksonville but his plans veer off course when he crashes in practice, fracturing the joint at the base of his left big toe. He gets up and puts in one fast lap to get qualified for the night programme then sits out the rest of the day. However, when the races get going, so does Villopoto. He grabs the holeshot both in his heat race and the Main Event and rides a very steady – and very fast – race out front to take the much-needed win and trim Dungey's points lead to 21 as he finishes second.

But besides the points battle, the biggest story of the night comes from Canard in his last 450cc race of the season. He starts at the tail end of the top 10 but makes some quick passes to move into seventh by the end of the lap. Over the next few laps he picks off Hill and Millsaps – the latter doing everything he can to stop his upstart team-mate from beating him, including nearly running Canard into the mechanics' area mid-battle – then gets Valli Motorsports Yamaha's Ivan Tedesco.

Canard moves into fourth on lap 11, then heads out after his full-time team-mate Kevin Windham of the GEICO Powersports Honda team. Windham puts up a fight for the last five laps of the race, including cutting Canard off going into a corner, nearly causing Canard to fall when he hits Windham's rear wheel. Still, Canard regrouped and goes back after Windham and when the two get the white flag Canard is right on Windham's tail. Canard sets Windham up coming through the final whoop section, then the two race toward the final turn on the track and Canard aggressively squares the turn off and dives underneath Windham, beating him to the line by less than half-a-biklength to take his fifth podium finish in a row.

Short should be back on that bike come round 13 in Houston and Canard moves on to get back aboard his 250F for the final rounds of the Lites West and then the AMA Nationals.

Villopoto has five rounds to try and make up 21 points on Dungey which means that even if Villopoto wins every race Dungey can win the title by just finishing behind him.



SITTING PRETTY!

POURCEL IN POLE TO LIFT LITES EAST TITLE >>

As the Lites East heads into Daytona, Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki's Christophe Pourcel holds a six-point lead over former team-mate Austin Stroupe who now rides for the Rockstar/Makita Suzuki squad. Stroupe has been second in both races going into Daytona and both times behind Pourcel.

Pourcel, on the other hand, is nursing injuries from a crash after round one in Indianapolis but it doesn't slow him down much as he grabs a third place start behind Stroupe who has the holeshot and Rockstar Energy Suzuki's Blake Baggett who starts out second. Pourcel makes quick work of Baggett, then chases down Stroupe and passes him in one of the darker corners of the track and begins to pull away. Stroupe hangs on for second over Pourcel's rookie team-mate Dean Wilson – a Canadian. Baggett finishes right on their tail in fourth, narrowly missing his first podium finish.

Pourcel carries a nine-point lead into Toronto and he seems completely in control until a miscalculation in a rhythm section while leading his heat leaves him on his head and scrambling. After finishing way back in his heat – but qualifying – Pourcel still manages a third-place start but it's rookie Justin Barcia from the GEICO Powersports Honda team who manages to grab the holeshot and checks out from Stroupe and Pourcel in second and third. Stroupe hangs on for second over Pourcel who seems happy with third on a night when he's already ended up on his head.

Wilson is fourth but gets nabbed at the border by US security and isn't allowed to re-enter the United States due to visa issues.

When the gates open in Dallas, Wilson is still sitting in Canada –

unable to make it to the race in Texas. And when the gate drops in Dallas only five of the 20 Lites riders on the line make it through the first turn without hitting the dirt. With three-quarters of the Lites field on the ground, Pourcel takes his time getting up assuming that there would be a red flag thrown and the race would be restarted.

However, when race leader Ryan Sipes crosses the finish line he gets the green flag and Pourcel then begins to rush to get his bike started. He gets going nearly last while Sipes is being hounded by Baggett, Barcia and Sipes.

Baggett hangs behind Sipes for most of the race but on the last lap he finds a line and goes by Sipes to take the victory – his first ever. Sipes finishes second while Barcia hangs on for third. Martin Davalos, who caused the first turn crash, somehow grabs fourth over Stroupe, Matt Lemoine and Pourcel.

Then comes Jacksonville. After two off weekends with a third and a seventh, Pourcel comes into Jacksonville with something to prove. Pourcel doesn't start out in the front in Jacksonville, though. Instead, GEICO Powersports Honda's Brett Metcalfe takes the holeshot and leads the first six laps over Stroupe and Pourcel. However, as Stroupe attempts to go by Metcalfe he gets hung up and Pourcel goes by both of them in a matter of two turns and takes the lead. And that's all there is...

Pourcel runs away with the victory and even a late-race crash in the whoops doesn't get Stroupe close enough to strike. Stroupe settles for yet another second place finish and Metcalfe takes third.

With two rounds left, Pourcel leads Stroupe by eight points which means Stroupe must win and Pourcel must finish at least third or worse in order for Stroupe to pull off the title.



Blake Baggett heads to his first SX win in Dallas after missing the opening turn carnage



Austin Stroupe is running out of time to overhaul Lites East leader Christophe Pourcel



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Mike Alessi's raced pre-season in Europe to prepare for the AMA Nationals on KTM's new 350cc machine – at least, that was the plan

MIKE'S BIKE!

WITH ALESSI FLYING THE FLAG FOR KTM'S 350cc 'EXPERIMENT' IN THE US, OUR STATESIDE INDUSTRY INSIDER CONDUCTS A QUICK PIT POLL...

Words by STEVE MATTHES Photo by RAY ARCHER

As you read this the United States motorcycle racing community is in the throes of its annual supercross season and the drama is high. The pre-season favourites – Chad Reed and James Stewart – have been knocked out of the points race with injuries and will just be coming back around halfway. Their departure left the field wide open and the youngsters have seized the opportunity. Riders like Ryan Dungey, Ryan Villopoto and Josh Hill have all risen up and become contenders.

But there are some exciting things happening away from the bright lights and fireworks of the domes. One of those youngsters that may very well have been in the mix for the title but for a slight career detour is Mike Alessi. Once the golden child of American motocross, Alessi has – through a combination of self-inflicted wounds and bad luck – been unable to ascend to the upper echelon of motocross. Mike has been in a position many times to be there but can't seem to close the deal. Supercross has never come easy for Mike (although a few years he was appearing to get better and better before breaking his collarbone) and when he was dropped from his Team Suzuki contract after last season, Mike and his family signed with KTM for the second time.

The only thing with that is that it came with a caveat. No supercross and he would be the point man in America in developing the Austrian company's newest idea – a linkage-based 350cc four-stroke. It's a risky move on a few different levels. One is the fact that the majority of sponsor dollars and contracts are based on what a rider does in supercross not the Nationals, two is the fact that it's an all-new machine with a cc disadvantage compared to his competitors. And lastly, KTM have – for whatever reason – never been able to be a dominant player in the big bike class. It's certainly going to be very interesting to see if Alessi can recapture the form that saw him taking off from the pack last summer before suffering a devastating knee injury. It's an experiment that is worth watching and fascinating to myself and many others.

How is it going to work? I polled some people in the pits at a recent SX to get their thoughts on the new machine and how Mike's going to adapt to it...

JIMMY BUTTON – FORMER FACTORY RIDER NOW RIDER AGENT

"It's hard to say really. I know that Cairoli went out there and killed the other weekend. I know it looks cool and it has a linkage. I definitely think the linkage is the way to go. I'm sure Mike Alessi will still holeshot on the thing. I also think that with a fully operational Dungey and Villopoto that bike won't be able to compete. I could be wrong but I know that Cairoli won last year's title on a 390 or whatever. He killed them. He didn't always get great starts but he still came through the pack pretty good. Who knows? We'll see and I'm looking forward to it."

MITCH PAYTON – OWNER PRO CIRCUIT

"It's probably not a bad idea, it's something that everybody talked about a while ago and I guess they followed through with it. However, I just don't see the Japanese going down that path because, for example, Yamaha just built an all-new 450 and so they're committed to that, the other OEMs have brought in all-new versions of their machines recently so they're committed to the 450. Also, you can't forget that that the 450s share parts with the dual-sport versions and UTVs as well. Everything with the Japanese is cost right now, they're not going to put a lot of resources into a very specific bike.

"If the 450 was too much for people to ride, then the amateur events would remove them from the races. That's not the case though, you can be 16 years old and ride one. You don't need to modify them for sure, maybe throw a pipe on it or something like that because for 90 per cent of the people that buy them they are fine. They last longer than a 250 for sure.

"I don't think it matters how Mike's going to do. I think it matters how Cairoli is going to do and I think he'll do fine on it. No-one ever knows about Mike, I really don't know what to say. I think his starts will be fine unless the starts are ripped really deep and super long. The bike can get out of the gate better than a 450 because it won't spin."

ERIC KEHOE – HONDA RED BULL RACING MANAGER

"I think it's pretty interesting but for us the 450 is the number one selling bike. That's what we're

marketing and focused on right now. We're also looking forward to improving that bike down the line. I'm not sure what their production run is or what kind of numbers they're looking to turn out.

"There are no plans for Honda to make a 350 or anything like that, we're looking forward to improving our bike. With Mike racing it, it's going to be interesting. The starts might prove to be a disadvantage for him as they water them, disc them up and some of them are pretty long. His greatest strength is the start so we'll see how that turns out."

JIMMY PERRY – FACTORY YAMAHA MANAGER

"As long as they go through all the proper homologations and all that it will be in dealerships. Then I say bring it on. The best guys usually win the races no matter what bike they're on. I don't see it being really an advantage in any areas. But I also don't see it being a disadvantage either. I think the disadvantages come from not being in shape, not having tuneability in your bike and not being able to put it together as a rider. I also think it will be fine on the start."

ANDREW SHORT – HONDA RED BULL RACING RIDER

"I don't think I'm educated enough about that bike to make a judgment on it to be honest. I would think it would be a disadvantage on the starts and on a professional level it's too hard to come from the back all the time. I think Mike Alessi needs the start for success and that bike might take away from his advantage so who knows? Who also knows if it is indeed a 350, 380 or 390?"

KENNY WATSON – HART & HUNTINGTON HONDA MANAGER

"I think it's going to be okay, I think if you have the right guy on it the thing will be fine. Antonio Cairoli has been killing it over in Europe on the bike, it's been great for him. I think at some tracks it might be at a slight disadvantage, the ones with the transitions up and down hills. I think a smaller guy like Mike Alessi will be fine on it but I also don't see the other OEMs building 350s anytime soon. But then again, I never thought I'd ever see the OEMs build good four-strokes!"



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EBB AND FLOW!

SINCE TURNING PRO IN 2006 IT'S BEEN A ROLLER-COASTER RIDE FOR ELLIOTT BANKS-BROWNE BUT ARMED WITH A NEW TEAM AND ONE OF THE FASTEST BIKES IN THE PADDOCK LIFE'S LOOKING SWEET FOR DB RACING HONDA'S HIRED GUN...

Words and photos by JP O'CONNELL

Elliott's back on a Honda for 2010 and all the early signs are that he's right at home on the marque he knows best





As the saying goes 'you can't keep a good man down' and after injuries made for a far from stellar season in 2009, Elliott Banks-Browne is hoping that 2010 will see him and his new team DB Racing Honda both fulfilling their full potential.

By returning to the red machines Elliott's adult career has turned full circle.

Joining the pro ranks at the tender age of 16, it was a baptism of fire for the boy from Bury St Edmunds who signed up for the RWJ Honda squad and a full season of GPs in 2006 fresh off the back of winning the BSMA 125cc title.

"To be honest I really shouldn't have done GPs in my first year," admits Elliott. "It's just that I was given the opportunity so I thought I'd give it a go, I hadn't realised just how fast those guys were."

The following season saw Elliott sign with the brand new family-owned Swift Suzuki outfit with the prospect of both a full domestic and GP calendar under one of the largest awnings in the paddock. "I managed to hurt myself again meaning that I missed a few GPs," he remembers. "But I did manage to qualify for my first GPs that season, including the British GP which was awesome."

With another year of competition under his

belt Elliott's pro career started to gather momentum. "My best year was 2008 as I finished up sixth in the British MX2 championship. I had some really good races with some thirds and fourths although I never managed to get on the podium. But I was happy with sixth as it was a pretty stacked field that year – Carl [Nunn], [Jason] Dougan, everyone was in it."

Seemingly on a roll and already verbally signed to stay another year at Swift, it came as a huge shock when the team announced that they were going to be pulling out of motocross completely with immediate effect, leaving the teenager without a ride for the '09 season.

With most team line-ups already finalised and things looking desperate, a chance meeting with LPE Kawasaki's Steve James at the Motocross des Nations resulted in an offer to ride the British domestic championships. Without the distraction of the GPs it was an opportunity for EBB to do well in his home series in the hope of landing a GP ride for the future. But unfortunately fate was about to deal him another crappy hand.

"Pre-season we were in America practising and I was riding really good. But then I twisted my knee really bad, pulling some ligaments and stuff, so we went into the first round not really knowing what to expect as the knee was so bad.

As it happens we ended up qualifying in third and we thought everything was going good until I managed to twist the knee during the race. Two weeks later I broke my shoulder pretty bad and was out for pretty much half of the season and it took me a really long time to get back into it really.

"The team was really good but I was just struggling that year. I moved up to the 450 and again ended up having bad luck. To sum it up my best race last year was when I crashed at the start and ended up coming from last to sixth!"

Having spent his first three seasons as a pro travelling Europe racing the world championships some may have seen a domestic-only deal as a backward step but for Elliott it made good sense. "I did feel like I was going backwards at the beginning of '09 but the GPs are really expensive to go to and there's a lot of good people racing only in England so I was cool with it, especially with the Red Bull Pro Nationals starting.

"After that Carl, James Noble and Brad [Anderson] were all in England so there are a lot of good riders racing in the UK and to keep the pace up was good. By the end of the year I was able to tag onto the back of them so that brought my confidence back up, knowing that I

A BIT FROM THE BOSS!

VICKI JEFFREYS ON HER NEW SIGNING...

"Neville decided that he wanted a change so we needed to find a rider who could run his pace, someone who's top five and that we can bring on," explains DB Racing's Vicki Jeffreys. "We knew that Elliott had that potential so we made him an offer and he accepted. Last year we ran with Michael as a second rider but to be honest it just costs too much, we just don't have that kind of sponsorship in place so we decided to dedicate everything towards one rider."

"We know that it can put a lot of pressure on that rider to always be fit and perform and there's always the worry that he could be injured but it's not at the forefront of our minds, we just want Elliott to do the best he can out there."

"You can only expect a rider to do what he can do, I mean Elliott is a totally different rider to Nev and gets his results in different ways. I really think Elliott can finish top five in the British and it would be good to win back the #1 plate in the Red Bull championship, he is more than capable given the right machinery and environment. We have had a good start to the season and we will get to some of the GPs to bring Elliott along and get him back out there in that environment."



Team DB Racing - Vicki Jeffreys, Ian Browne, Elliott, Matt Hutchins and David Bright



could keep up with them."

Happy with his results towards the end of the season a deal with LPE for 2010 was talked about but a stumbling block for Elliott was the Maxxis tyres the team use. "The team were really good but I just couldn't get on with the Maxxis tyres, some people can but I can't and that was the main reason that I didn't re-sign."

Fresh off the back of winning the Red Bull Pro National MX2 title last season, DB Racing were on the look out for a new rider after the defection of current champ Neville Bradshaw to Samsung Yamaha and the return home of Kiwi Michael Phillips.

"Dave [Bright – DB Racing team owner] offered me a really good ride here. I knew Nev had always done good with DB and that their bikes were really fast with good sponsors behind them. We are going to do some of the GPs – if you want to win the British championships you have to be running with the top guys every week. When riders like Jake [Nicholls] and Zach [Osborne] go off to the GPs they're getting an advantage so we thought we need to do the same to keep the speed there."

Throughout his pro career Elliott's never managed to keep a mechanic for a whole season with dad Ian stepping in to take over

each time. So this time they thought they'd cut out the middleman.

"We thought this year we may as well start with him as I know I'll end up finishing with him," laughs Elliott. "Dave was cool with it as he's known dad for ages and as dad's been around motocross for so long he knows everyone and is able to get hold of bits pretty easily."

As has become custom for Elliott, an injury reared its ugly head in the form of a badly broken collarbone sustained in the British SX championship in November, leaving him plated, pinned and unable to start training until the beginning of January. The injury healed well and by February the team were in Murcia, Spain, testing set-up and engine parts before the start of the season.

And early form seems to suggest that this setback hasn't done him too much harm with a solid sixth overall at the opening round of the British championship. "It went really well at Little Silver. Unfortunately I got armpump in the third moto which kind of spoiled things after my second and fourth. I'm still pretty pleased though, I mean there's still about 24 motos left and anyone can have a bad race."

Having been used to riding for multiple rider teams the set-up at DB suits Elliott down to the

ground. "The atmosphere here is awesome, it almost doesn't seem like a race team. You go to the race really relaxed, Swift was more like a circus than a race team sometimes – it was so big, you were under that massive awning with loads of people watching everything that you do. There was so much pressure on you to do good, here is like the absolute opposite."

With DB Racing opting to run a sole rider this year in order to free up some funds towards selected GPs it's down to Elliott to bring home the bacon this season, a job that doesn't seem to faze the young man. "I don't mind being the only rider, Dave has a lot of faith in me. Sometimes it's good to have a team-mate but on the other hand everything is focussed on me, I get 100 per cent attention all of the time. I know I can do well in every race and hopefully it should pay off having one rider. Dave is so laidback and I think that's why I'm doing well because he doesn't put pressure on you. It's good for me, they just want me to do my best."

As if to prove his point Elliott put in a storming ride on his 250F at the first round of the Red Bull Pro Nationals, finishing third in the first moto behind the 450s of Maxxis MX1 champion Brad Anderson and defending RBPN MX1 champion Carl Nunn.



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TOP TUNES!

MATT'S THE MAN...

They may be a small team but DB Racing have always had exceptionally fast bikes, down in no small part to EVO-TECH's Matt Hutchins who has been working with the team since 2008. For 2010 it was all change as the carburettors found their way into the bin and Honda slapped a new fuel injection system on the bike but Matt's still working his magic.

"The new bike has been a challenge definitely, it's been a steep learning curve," admits Matt. "The power characteristics are a lot different than the carburetted bikes, the mid-range bang has gone replaced with a very responsive bottom-end which gives a fairly smooth delivery all the way through and that's something we've been trying to change, trying to bring that aggressiveness back into the bike."

"From the point of view of development the whole spectrum has just opened up with the fuel injection, there's so much further you can go and even on race day there's so much more you can change very easily. The main advantage with the fuel injection is you know it's going to be consistent, so if you want to run a particularly rich fuel map that suits the bike then everywhere you go it will cover all the parameters of altitude, temperature and always keep it to the map you have put in it."

"Another huge advantage is you can control the power delivery just with the use of a laptop or with the new ECU system we've been developing which are manually adjustable from the box, a bit like adjusting the clickers on your suspension – it's that easy for the mechanics to do. It's been good working with Elliott, he's good at testing and gives you lots of feedback. He makes my job easy!"



Team owner David Bright's laidback attitude is good for Elliott

"I love this bike! I've always liked Hondas, I grew up on them. They are so light and fast I just feel more comfortable on them. With the new fuel injection the bike is awesome, you used to have this big bog on Hondas but now there's nothing, it's just instant power. We've been having a little trouble setting up the suspension – the bike was rocking/diving through the corners – but Full Travel's Kevin Harris gave us an Ohlins kit this week and that seems to have sorted things. Don't get me wrong, the standard suspension is good, it's just getting it set up. It's an all-new bike so it's going to take time."

Now on his third team in as many seasons, the early signs are that Elliott has found a team that suits him and that's injected a huge load of enthusiasm into the extremely likeable #44 pilot.

"At the beginning of last year wasn't enjoying myself but I really am now and at the end of the day you have to be enjoying it if you want to do good, if you're not then what's the point? Now I just want to get out practising, I'm enjoying it even when it's rough!"

With this enthusiasm comes the motivation, determination and drive to put in everything that he has to in order to achieve his ultimate goals and ambitions. "This year I want to win the Red Bull championship and I want nothing less than top three in the British, although the goal is to win that as well! As far as the future goes then I want to win a British championship, go to the worlds and see what I can do there – my granddad was twice second in the world so it's in my genes! I think that I can do it, I've got the right support behind me and I think I can get there one day."

"It's going to take a lot of effort and it takes a lot of sacrifice to be world champion – everything has to be perfect for you. Hopefully I can have a good year this year and get back into the GPs and show what I can do."





The 18-year-old Alaskan has got big ambitions in Britain

TRADING PLACES!

IN AN AGE WHEN MUCH OF OUR YOUNG EUROPEAN TALENT WANTS TO HEAD STATESIDE TO TRY THEIR LUCK, AMERICAN TEENAGER BEN LAMAY'S DOING THINGS THE OTHER WAY AROUND...

Words by **Sean Lawless** Photos by **Sutty**

Racing in America is pretty much the standard European teenage dream these days. Max Anstie, Steven Clarke and Adam Chatfield are just three Brits who are living the Stateside dream and even riders who have already tasted GP success – think Tommy Searle and world champions Christophe Pourcel and Tyla Rattray – are prepared to travel halfway across the world to put their hard-won reputations on the line.

But these are tough economic times, team budgets on both sides of the Atlantic have been pared down to the bone and ambitious young pros are increasingly being forced to chase deals – even if this means heading in the opposite direction to the Searles, Pourcels and Rattrays of this world.

Ben LaMay has raced both the AMA SX and Nationals series but for 2010 the 18-year-old from Anchorage in Alaska will be hanging it out in the UK aboard a 450cc Samsung Yamaha. Admittedly, he didn't set the world on fire in '09 after failing to make an AMA Supercross Main Event and only cracking the 450 top 10 once outdoors. But there's a whole lot of difference between rolling up at Glen Helen and rolling up at Little Silver. So why pick the UK over the USA? In short he got an offer that was too good to refuse.

"Last year I did the last round of the British, didn't do too bad and Roy Emberson offered me a ride and I'd be stupid not to take it. He's got a really strong team and a lot of good sponsors behind him and he takes care of his riders really

well. When the offer was available I thought it was a good opportunity for me to come over and give it a shot.

"I never really thought about racing over here. The AMA Nationals and supercross was pretty much what I thought I'd do. But coming over here is really cool, it's just a lot different. But I'm starting to get the hang of it and it's fun."

Ben's initial showing in the UK was at Landrake when he went 10-6 in MX1 – good enough for eighth overall – after an invitation from Steven Clarke's dad Richard to try his luck in the Maxxis championship. It's a case of motocross trading places that's still ongoing as Ben's currently living with the Clarke family in Stourbridge – although Scuba Steve doesn't spend his time Stateside staying with the LaMays in Alaska!

We've read all about the culture shock Tommy and Max have encountered moving from England to the States but what's it like the other way around for a kid from Anchorage who sets up home on the outskirts of Birmingham? >>





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SCARE TACTICS!

HANGING WITH TRAVIS >>

Under 'scariest thing you've ever done' in the RBPN programme, Ben lists backflipping a motorcycle. Now that's the sort of statement that demands an explanation...

"When I was younger I went to Travis Pastrana's house for a couple of days. Me and Travis are pretty good friends and he taught me how to do a backflip into a foam pit. I did it on 250 and a 110 and a bicycle and all sorts of different stuff. It was fun. We did some riding with him and messed about his house. Travis is a cool guy.

"I met him when I used to stay at Millsaps Training Facility back when I was on 80s. He used to ride there with Davi Millsaps – they were really good buddies – which is how we met. And one day when I was in the area he just invited me up to his house."



Ben rates Hawkstone 'gnarly rough' following his appearance at the pre-season international



"There's a big difference between here and Alaska – the people, the cars, the food. It took a while for me to get used to it but it's coming on now. And Richard's house is pretty cool – he's got a little track in his backyard and I go out there and mess around and there are some other tracks around there.

"I was born in Washington but I've lived in Alaska my whole life. Up there the motocross scene is actually pretty big and it's getting a lot bigger. There are a few tracks up there that are pretty decent and the summers are real nice – the winters are obviously cold. But it's pretty cool, it really is."

Ben has a solid, successful youth career behind him and regularly mixed it with riders who are rapidly making a name for themselves in the US.

"I've won Loretta's twice on a 65 and an 85 and a bunch of amateur national titles. Moving up to the A class I've gotten a couple of seconds in the age group I came up with. Austin Stroupe, Nico Izzi, Blake Wharton and Justin Barcia, all those guys – we're all in kinda the same age

range. So it's good to keep an eye on those guys and see how they're doing and I'm doing."

But while his peers were making waves in the SX Lites division, Ben – who's a strapping six-footer – found himself playing with the big boys on 450s in his debut indoor season.

"I really didn't know what to expect going into my rookie season in supercross and I wasn't prepared enough. I'm a bigger guy and I was riding a 450 better than a 250 and the 450 class last year was really stacked with Stewart and everybody. I didn't do what I should have with my expectations but it was a really, really good learning experience.

"I got the LCQ gas card about four or five times which is when you miss the Main Event by one position so I got that a bunch. There were a lot of bike problems too, not the greatest of years. I wish I could have done it again this year because I could've done better and got some results but maybe in a couple of years to come I'll do it again. Supercross is definitely a lot different but I'm pretty good at jumping and that sort of stuff so I like supercross."

>>



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Now the UK season's up and running Ben's being treated to a crash course in British tracks, taking in three very different styles of circuit in the space of a fortnight.

"Foxhill is sweet – by far the funnest track I've ridden out of Hawkstone last weekend and Little Silver the week before. It's got some good jumps and fun hills and I'm more of a hardpack rider than a sand guy so I like this track and was really excited when I saw it.

"Little Silver was a really fun track and the layout was cool, it was just kinda unfortunate about the weather. It wasn't really muddy but it made it one-line but they put a lot of effort into prepping the track and it was a lot better than what we all expected. Hawkstone was really fun – the sand and the hill and just how gnarly rough it got and then racing with the GP guys and stuff. I'm looking forward to trying out all these new tracks."

There's a strong tradition of fast American riders coming over to Europe to have a crack at lifting a world title but Ben's one-year agreement with Roy Emberson's team is a domestic-only

deal. Wouldn't he jump at the chance to follow in the footsteps of fellow countrymen like Donny Schmit, Trampas Parker and Tallon Vohland who made a lasting impact on GP MX?

"We're taking about racing the British Grand Prix and I'd really, really like to do that because it would be a good experience but I don't know if we are or not. If we don't it's not that big a deal. Who knows? We'll see how it goes and if I get some better finishes in the British and Red Bull series then maybe we'll do it."

So for now – at least – his main focus is on the UK where he's still struggling to find his feet. With two rounds down his best race result in the Maxxis series has been an eighth, backed up with a race two fourth in the Pro Nationals opener at Foxhill. It's a start to the season he believes he's capable of dramatically improving on.

"I should be on the podium – that's where I'd like to be, one of the top three. There are five to eight really good quality guys but realistically I should be in the top three. Top five is not too bad but top three is definitely my expectations."



In Maxxis championship action at Mallory Park – Ben's looking for podium finishes



EMBO'S BIT!

ROY RECKONS...

"The first time I saw Ben was at Landrake last year – to be honest I didn't even know who he was, I thought he was just a local rider having a good ride. I thought 'hello, who's this kid' because I had Wayne [Smith] there and a French kid and he caught them both in both races and went by them. Then I spoke to Richard Clarke and I said about the kid and he said 'he's with me, he's come over from America' and it went on from there.

"So we done him a deal. He was going to do a bit of mechanicing for himself and work for us a couple of days but realised he couldn't do that so I got him a full-time mechanic.

"Practising he's awesome, he's unbelievably fast. On race day he's a different boy. Before Foxhill we took him out practising on the Saturday and that seemed to cure it but of course you haven't always got time to go practising on the Saturday. But we're on it and trying to work it out. You haven't seen the best of him yet."



TRADING PLACES!

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS!

THE NEWLY-RENAMED ENDURO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP IS SHAPING UP TO BE ONE OF THE CLOSEST FOR YEARS WITH GENUINE TITLE RIVALS IN ALL THREE MAIN CLASSES – BUT WE’VE STILL GOT OUR MONEY ON KNIGHTER...

Words and photos by Jonty Edmunds





Johnny Aubert is one of two Frenchmen looking good for the Enduro 1 world crown

ENCOUNTER



By the time you read this David Knight will be leading the Enduro 3 world championship having dominated the big bike class at the opening round of the 2010 Enduro World Championship. He'll be sitting pretty at the top of the E3 standings with a sizeable points advantage, his reward for solid performances throughout both days of the GP of Spain.

Dominating the 2010 EWC opening round – and in doing so getting his plans for a third world title off to the best possible start – is exactly what Knighter and his British fans want to see happen. Of course, you'll have to check out next month's DBR to find out if the mighty Manxman did manage to dominate the E3 class but if his recent form is anything to go on there's a damn good chance he will have done.

"I'm feeling really good and looking forward to

the world championship," comments Knight at the end of the second day of the British Enduro Sprint Championship. "With KTM, WP and my mechanic, we've not stopped testing since the start of the year. I was happy when I first jumped on the bike but since then it's got better and better. I feel like I did back in '06."

Back in '06 Knighter was unquestionably the most dominant rider in the WEC. Overflowing with confidence and at one with his booming factory KTM, there was no event or rider that could stop him. At the end of the season he secured his second world title and four years later he's determined to do it again.

"It's been a long time since I last won a world title but of course that's my goal for this year. The thing I hated most about last year was not being able to enjoy what would have been some great events. I'm really looking forward to

enjoying my racing again this year. I hope it'll be a great year."

Standing between David and a possible third Enduro 3 world title is Frenchman Christophe Nambotin. While some believe that an on-form Knighter can be stopped by no-one, '09 overall ISDE winner Nambotin is the rider many believe will make life difficult for the Manxman. With Knight leading KTM's charge for the E3 title, Nambotin does the same for Gas Gas. Competing for a team and on machinery that he's come to know inside out during the past three years, many believe that this is the year he will emerge as the latest title-winning Frenchman.

There are of course other riders in the E3 class that will play their part in the championship's outcome but few are expected to challenge either Knight or Nambotin as far as the

Expect a three-way fight for E2 honours with Mika Ahola in the thick of it



Manxman David Knight starts favourite for the E3 crown

title is concerned. Most likely to get themselves in on the action are KTM riders Bartosz Oblucki and Simone Albergoni.

When it comes to the Enduro 1 class one thing is pretty much certain this year – a Frenchman will win. Above and beyond that it's anyone's guess as to who will land the title as KTM's Johnny Aubert and Husqvarna's Antoine Meo go head-to-head in one of the most eagerly anticipated battles of the year.

On paper, with his two consecutive E2 world titles, Aubert is the stronger of the two riders. But having dominated the second half of last year's E1 series Meo is a rider no-one is willing to bet against and certainly well at home in the small bike class.

The thing that makes their battle so interesting – and so close to call – is that the two riders have no real previous form together. Yes,

they both raced in E2 during '08 but that was Meo's debut enduro season. Today a much more complete and competent rider, the big question is does Meo have the speed to beat Aubert over 16 days of competition?

Neither rider has any real weaknesses. Both are fast in all types of terrain. Both know what it takes to win races. Staying mentally strong throughout 2010 will be of paramount importance for both riders. And should either rider suffer just one mechanical breakdown their title hopes will almost certainly be over, no matter how well they ride for the remainder of the season.

The name of the rider that will claim the final podium position come the end of the series is equally as hard to predict. KTM will be hoping to get Finn Eero Remes on the box while Italian Fabio Mossini will likely be there or thereabouts

on his Honda. But it's Yamaha rider Cristobal Guerrero who could well end up joining Aubert or Meo – or Meo and Aubert depending on which way the championship swings – at the top of the class come the end of the final event of the series in late September.

In the Enduro 2 class three heavyweights of the international enduro scene will come together this year, all wanting to add to their already extensive title hauls. Reigning E1 world champ Mika Ahola returns to E2 for 2010 and with it looks to claim his fourth consecutive world crown. Ivan Cervantes, last year's E3 title winner, wants to claim his first Blue Ribbon crown while Juha Salminen searches once again for an elusive eighth EWC title.

Salminen, despite his unquestionable talent and past championship winning successes, is the rider that many see as facing the



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Last year's E3 champ
Ivan Cervantes is aiming
for E2 glory in 2010



Seven-time world champ Juha Salminen
will start for BMW but is expected to
switch to Husqvarna mid-season



2010 FWC

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www.motoclubvalverdeno.org
Airport: Seville (90km)

April 17/18 Portugal (Fafe)
Motor Clube De Guimaraes
www.motor-clube-guimaraes.pt
Airport: Porto (50km)

May 22/23 Italy (Lovere)
Moto Club Bergamo
www.motoclub.bergamo.it
Airport: Bergamo (50km)

June 12/13 Poland (Kwidzyn)
Kwidzynski Klub Motorowy
www.enduro.kwidzyn.pl
Airport: Gdansk (100km)

June 19/20 Slovakia (Puchov)
Enduro Club Puchov
www.ecpu.sk
Airport: Bratislava (160km)

August 28/29 Greece (Serres)
L.A.M.S – Auto Moto Club Of Serres
www.lams.gr
Airport: Thessaloniki (105km)

Sept 04/05 Turkey (Fethiye)
L.A.M.S – Auto Moto Club Of Serres
www.lams.gr
Airport: Antalya (200km)

Sept 25/26 France (Noiretable)
Montoncel Racing Competition
Airport: Clermont Ferrand (60km)



Frenchman Christophe Nambotin
could be the only man capable of
derailing Knighter's title plans

Cristobal Guerrero is a
podium hope in E1



toughest challenge. Starting his second season with BMW, Juha will be hoping for a better start to the year than his '09 campaign. But having spent the majority of last season improving, getting used to and better understanding his factory BMW, Juha will – now that he's somewhere near where he needs and wants to be with the bike – most likely only ride it for a couple of races.

With the BMW Motorrad Motorsport team having become the BMW Husqvarna Motorsport team, the smart money says a mid-season swap to an all-new Husqvarna machine is on the cards. With a 'bedding in' period likely to follow any switch of machinery, can Juha realistically challenge for the title?

While Juha can never be counted out it's the

two world champions from '09 – Mika and Ivan – that many are looking at to fight for the title. Of the two of them it's anyone's guess who will win. In '08 Mika beat Ivan to the E1 world title. Last year Mika claimed a second E1 crown while Ivan returned to his best to claim the E3 championship. Mika has already topped the E2 class back in '07 but so far this season it seems that Ivan is the more 'on form' of the two.

Both riders are supremely talented and reigning world champions, continuing to race for teams they know well and undoubtedly focused on winning. Just as in the E1 class and possibly the E3 category, too, the battle for top honours in the E2 division is going to run and run, right up until the final round of the championship.



Wild riding Taddy Blazusiak is impressive...



...but not as impressive as the dominant David Knight

NEW SENSATION!

NOT JUST THE START OF A NEW CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON BUT THE START OF A TOTALLY NEW SERIES, THE BRITISH ENDURO SPRINT CHAMPIONSHIP HAS ARRIVED...

Photos by NUNO LARANJEIRA

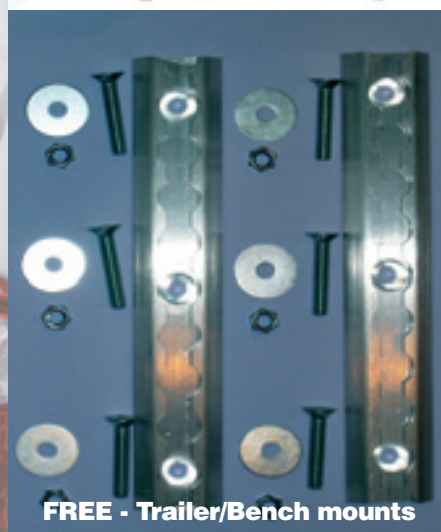
*TM UK's Phillip
McLaughlin goes 4-6
over the two days*





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Motocrossers are racers which is why few are willing to strap lights to their bikes and head for the hills and give enduro a go. Let's face it with all their strange rules, time cards and odd tyres, for many the prospect of trying an enduro isn't overly appealing.

"Although the machinery used for both motocross and enduro events is near identical as everyone knows the two sports are night and day different," explains ACU Trial and Enduro Committee Chairman John Collins. "For many motocross racers trying enduro simply isn't an option which is something we hope to change with the BESC.

"The BESC is all about racing. There might not be all that many jumps at some rounds of the series but the 'race your bike, then back to the paddock at the end of each lap' format is very similar to motocross. We're not looking to convert scores of motocross riders to this new format of enduro racing but if we can be successful in encouraging some to try it we're sure they'll like it."

More information on the series can be found by visiting www.enduro-sprint.com



Bolts goes nuts!

x50cm
x20in



The BESC demands a mix of speed, endurance and reliability - plus a big ole set of hairy boys for racing between trees

It's not exactly enduro – not as most people know it anyways – and it's not MX either. Yet despite being a discipline in its infancy a few things are already certain about the BESC – it's exciting, simple to understand and set to have a big impact on the UK enduro scene.

The newly-formed British Enduro Sprint Championship is, according to series promoters GMC Events, enduro racing for the 21st Century. A simpler, more dynamic, action-packed style of enduro racing, if the opening rounds of the series are anything to go by it certainly gets a thumbs up from the riders.

"It's been a great event, I've really enjoyed it," enthuses Knighter, the dominant player of the championship opener. "It's all about racing, racing, racing. You can really enjoy the racing and don't have to worry about small mistakes spoiling your result because there are loads of special tests. Traditional enduro events are great but I think this could be the future for enduro."

One thing there's no denying at the end of the season opener is that Knighter's certainly the man to beat. Winning each and every one of the opening round's nine special tests – and getting faster lap-on-lap throughout the day – DK then does the exact same thing again during round

two and amasses two sizeable overall wins.

"Both days have gone really well for me. It was a little tricky at the start of the first day because the track was still pretty slippery but once it started drying out I could get into my rhythm. We had more than an hour-and-a-half of special test racing the first day which was great. The better weather and reversed track for day two made it even more enjoyable."

Behind David on both days is Taddy Blazusiak – a rider better known for his extreme and indoor antics than his sprint speed. Keen to give the new discipline a go and get some last-minute special test practice ahead of the opening rounds of the Enduro World Championship, Taddy shows he's certainly no slouch.

"David is the fastest rider in the world in these conditions so I'm not surprised he was so far ahead," explains Taddy at the end of round one. "I was pleased with the way I rode because I didn't have any big problems."

Unchallenged by third place rider Greg Evans during round one and a country mile behind Knighter during round two, Blazusiak has his work cut out to claim the runner-up spot again as he battles throughout the day with Daryl Bolter.

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RESULTS

ELITE CLASS – RND 1

1	David Knight	KTM	1.32:53.00
2	Taddy Blazusiak	KTM	1.35:33.24
3	Greg Evans	KTM	1.36:57.46
4	Phillip McLaughlin	TM	1.37:44.39
5	Si Wakely	Husqvarna	1.38:01.74
6	Edward Jones	KTM	1.39:44.64
7	Gethin Price	KTM	1.42:25.95
8	Gordon Clarke	TM	1.43:01.30
9	Rob Jones	Yamaha	1.43:35.55
10	Paul Bolton	KTM	1.43:58.10

ELITE CLASS – RND 2

1	David Knight	KTM	1.06:09.42
2	Taddy Blazusiak	KTM	1.08:20.50
3	Daryl Bolter	KTM	1.08:26.17
4	Greg Evans	KTM	1.09:09.51
5	Si Wakely	Husqvarna	1.09:18.21
6	Phillip McLaughlin	TM	1.09:40.13
7	Edward Jones	KTM	1.11:48.48
8	Paul Bolton	KTM	1.13:13.89
9	Jon Hinam	KTM	1.13:20.99
10	Gordon Clarke	TM	1.13:40.38

WHAT IS ENDURO SPRINT RACING?

THE BESC IN A NUTSHELL...

Exciting, new and different to both enduro and motocross, the ACU British Enduro Sprint Championship is being billed as enduro racing for the 21st Century.

It's also Europe's first enduro sprint series and defined as being 'a test of speed, endurance and reliability based on enduro special tests'. The championship welcomes enduro, cross-country, trials and motocross riders.

The British Enduro Sprint Championship is very different to the traditional BEC. BESC events do not feature time checks – instead events are based around a special test which ensures day-long action and no hassles. There are no complicated rules and everything happens on site. It's simply about special test racing against the clock.

With just one location for the duration of each event, the paddock area is always just a stone's throw away from the start/finish of the special test and from there the special test is easily accessible.

At the opening round of the 2010 series David Knight, the event's fastest rider, completes over one-and-a-half hours of racing. That's racing, not riding. Each BESC course features a mixture of different natural off-road terrain. The special test is run in the reverse direction on the second day of each championship weekend.

BESC events are designed to offer challenging and enjoyable racing and are clearly and professionally marked. From winding grass tracks to steep descents and technical tree-lined climbs, each course features a multitude of different styles of natural terrain.



Gordon Clarke rips it up in the woods



Manx motocrosser Alex Rockwell tops the U23 division



Si Wakely is super-consistent with a pair of fifth-placed finishes

Counted out of a podium position during round one with a kinked fuel line, Bolter's out to prove a point on day two and never lets Taddy out of his sights. At the end of more than one hour of racing just six seconds separate the 250F-mounted duo.

"I gave everything to try and beat Taddy," comments Bolter, pleased to have put his disappointing day one result behind him. "There was nothing between us. Although I got third I'm really pleased with the way I rode. With Greg third on day one and myself third on day two it's been a good weekend for the KTM Off-Road Racing team."

Round one sees TM UK's Phillip McLaughlin well on the pace as he claims fourth on his debut ride aboard TM's 2010 250F. Managing to do enough to keep Husqvarna UK rider Si Wakely behind him, the pair round out the top five and place comfortably ahead of sixth-placed Ed Jones.

With Knight, Blazusiak and Bolter filling the top three at the end of round two Evans gets bumped down a spot into fourth but ends the

weekend as the best performing non-factory backed KTM rider over the two days.

Performing better in the drier conditions, Wakely comes close to demoting Evans another position as he closes to within nine seconds of the Welshman at the end of the second day. With McLaughlin not having as good a day as he did during round one, the fight between Evans and Wakely is every bit as close as that between Blazusiak and Bolter.

With the Expert and Under 23 classes providing plenty of memorable racing, two riders that stand out in the 'junior' division during rounds one and two are Manxmen Alex Rockwell and Daniel McCanney. Relatively inexperienced enduro racers, the pair show that they're keen to follow in Knight's footsteps and fly the flag for the Isle of Man by finishing at the top of the Under 23 class results on both days.

With Rocky ending up as the best performing U23 class rider aboard his 250F Husqvarna on both days, McCanney's right behind him ensuring a Manx one-two on his 300cc Gas Gas.

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Words by **Sean Lawless** Photos by **Sutty**



A 3-1 card puts
Steve Ramon on
top of the box
in MX1



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Max Nagl ends the day second in MX1 after a couple of solid rides



Kristian Whatley fails to break the top 10



EBB – fully knitted out



A nightmare stall on the last lap costs Tanel Leok the MX1 overall

It may be unlucky for some if a spot of eyes down bingo floats your boat but for the organisers of the Hawkstone International MX the 13th running of Britain's pre-season biggie lays on a full-house of spectators, world class riders and the kind of bar-bangin' racing the world famous venue is, er, world famous for!

And it's not even a genuine pre-season international anymore with the Maxxis championship opener at Little Silver kicking off the points-paying racing the weekend before. But while the Devon track is wet and windswept the big fella upstairs is smiling down on Hawkstone – either that or the organisers have cut a deal with the horned bloke below – and

easily double the crowd that's attracted to the Maxxis opener makes the annual pilgrimage to the Shropshire track.

Of course, as well as unseasonably warm sunshine for early March the best line-up you'll find in this country outside of a GP certainly helps get the paying public through the gates. The glory days of the mid-noughties when the likes of Stefan Everts, Joel Smets, Seb Tortelli and Mickael Pichon went hard at it may have passed but a quick look at the entry list reveals some seriously class acts for 2010.

Riders of the calibre of Red Bull KTM's Max Nagl, Teka Suzuki's Steve Ramon, his team-mate Clement Desalle, Beursfoon Suzuki's

Marc De Reuver, JR KTM's Kevin Strijbos and LS Motors Honda's Tanel Leok are all booked into MX1 – and that's just a selection of the 'foreign' talent. Home teams include CAS Honda pairing Gareth Swanepoel and Evgeny Bobryshev and PAR Honda's reigning Maxxis champ Brad Anderson.

The talent may not run quite so deeply in MX2 but along with home heroes including Red Bull KTM's Shaun Simpson and his UK opposite number Jake Nicholls the Hawkstone faithful are also treated to the sight of Teka Suzuki's German prodigy Ken Roczen – the fastest 15-year-old on the planet.

On the day Hawkstone doesn't prove such >>

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EXAMPLE/ILLUSTRATION ONLY

RESULTS

MX1 >>

1	Steve Ramon	Rockstar Teka Suzuki	15+20=35
2	Max Nagl	Red Bull KTM	13+17=30
3	Tanel Leok	LS Motors Honda	20+10=30
4	Clement Desalle	Rockstar Teka Suzuki	11+15=26
5	Gareth Swanepoel	CAS Honda	10+13=23
6	Marc De Reuver	Beursfoen Suzuki	17+0=17
7	Bas Verhoeven	Honda	7+9=16
8	Evgeny Bobryshev	CAS Honda	3+11=14
9	Carl Nunn	MVR-D Suzuki	6+7=13
10	Yentel Martens	JM Racing KTM	5+6=11

MX2 >>

1	Ken Roczen	Teka Suzuki	20+20=40
2	Dennis Verbruggen	JM Racing KTM	15+17=32
3	Jake Nicholls	HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK	11+15=26
4	Ceriel Kromhof	Van Beers Yamaha	10+9=19
5	Joel Roelants	JM Racing KTM	17+0=17
6	Nick Triest	Shineray Honda	7+10=17
7	Neville Bradshaw	Samsung Yamaha	5+11=16
8	Herjan Brakke	Jumbo Yamaha	6+8=14
9	Matiss Karro	MVR-D Suzuki	13+0=13
10	Arnaud Tonus	Teka Suzuki	0+13=13

SUPERFINAL >>

1 Leok, 2 Roczen, 3 Ramon, 4 De Reuver, 5 Desalle, 6 Swanepoel, 7 Verhoeven, 8 Bobryshev, 9 Nagl, 10 Tonus



Shaun Simpson crashes out early on



German 15-year-old Ken Roczen is the stand-out star of MX2



Dutch favourite Marc De Reuver backs up a race one second with a DNF



CAS Honda's Russian signing Evgeny Bobryshev fails to make an impression

a happy hunting ground for the Brits – especially in the Simpson camp when the Scot takes a header early on in race one while chasing Roczen. Shaun sustains a serious hand injury – and a pretty nasty facial gash – which counts him out for the remainder of the day and badly affects his preparations for the first GP of the year which is still a month down the line.

With Simpson's DNF it's Nicholls who takes up the charge for the British MX2 contingent but despite running as high as second at half-distance he's pushed back to fifth in the opener. Roczen wins it by over 30 seconds from Belgian Joel Roelants with Dutchman Dennis Verbruggen crossing the line just ahead of MVR-D Suzuki's Matiss Karro and Nicholls.

Second time out and Roczen records another win with The Reverend looking good for second until Verbruggen pounces just a corner from home.

Victory in MX1 goes to two-time world champion Ramon but the Belgian needs a big slice of luck in the second race to top the podium when Tanel Leok – winner of the opening moto by over 42 seconds – stalls at the start of the final lap and slips from second to sixth. With Leok dropping from a safe overall victory to third on the day, Nagl fills the second step of the podium with a 4-2 card.

With last year's British rider shoot-out – a three-quarter lap knock-out sprint – being ditched there's again room in the programme for

the mixed capacity Superfinal which sees the top riders in each division locking horns with the MX2 field getting a few seconds headstart. It's a guaranteed crowd-pleaser with the leading MX1 men being forced to carve their way through the 250F field as the fastest MX2 pilots do their best to run off and hide.

Amazingly, Roczen converts a great start into what's virtually a race-long lead before Leok – who takes just a handful of laps to get through to second – manages to get the German with two circuits to go. But even then it's not over as Roczen retakes the lead briefly before the Estonian uses his extra 200 cubes to put the result beyond doubt. Ramon crosses the line a distant third ahead of De Reuver and Desalle.



KINGS *OF* *THE* HILL!

ANDO GOES UNBEATEN IN MX1 AND THE REVEREND TAKES MX2 AS THE RED BULL PRO NATIONALS FESTIVAL OF MOTOCROSS KICKS OFF AT THE GREATEST TRACK ON THE PLANET...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Duddy





*Brad Anderson's the man
on form at the RBPN
opener at Foxhill,
streaking to a pair of wins*

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After his Saturday heroics on a 500cc stroker, Nez Parker runs top 10 the following day on a 450F



As a nipper I was lucky enough to witness some landmark moments in motocross – the 1984 British 500 GP springs first and foremost to mind. Yep, I was one of roughly 100,000* race fans who watched, slack-mouthed in awe, as Georges Jobe jumped the fearsome Hawkstone double...

Fast forward a decade or so and the major British GP action moved to the awesome Foxhill Moto Parc near Swindon – arguably the finest MX track on the planet and none other than the legendary Stefan Everts' all-time favourite circuit. Through the back end of the '90s I've sweltered and I've shivered at Foxhill, seeing sights that will stay with me until I'm pushing up daisies – Maler winning on a 125 in '95, Seb Tortelli crashing off the first tabletop in the valley in '97, RC struggling on a KX125 at the '98 MX des Nats.

I was also there in Y2K when Dobby won the British 125 GP before the event was called off after monsoon conditions turned the Sunday into a wash-out. And that was the last time I visited the venue until the opening round of this year's Red Bull Pro Nationals.

So it's a melancholic moment for me when Sully and I roll up in TranDawg™. I knew that lots and lots of work had gone

into restoring Foxhill to its former glory over the last few years – but I'd also read how the steep chalky slopes were worn out and knackered beyond repair following successive rain-lashed GPs and that notorious Nations. Talk about a mixture of anticipation and trepidation...

Anyway, this story isn't just about the venue – it's about the opening round of the Red Bull Pro Nationals. The organising MC Federation has set itself a mission to take motocross to the masses and, as first impressions really do count, they've made sure that Foxhill looks in pristine condition – a testament to the MCF's determination to present the sport professionally and also to the TLC of the Foxhill Motocross team.

In fact, it's tempting to say I hardly recognise the place from the morass I'd driven away from 10 years ago – but that would be a bunch of crap as the steep climbs and arse-clenching descents are just as I remember them. The only thing that's wildly different is the bright sunshine...

By not turning up until the Sunday it meant I'd missed three full blocks of Elite Youth Cup action plus the Open class races in the Fuchs-Silkolene British Two-Stroke series. You can catch up with what went on in the EYC by >>

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SERIES STANDINGS

RBPB MX1

1	Brad Anderson	PAR Honda	50
2	Stephen Sword	Buildbase CCM	38
3	Carl Nunn	MVR-D Suzuki	38
4	Jason Dougan	Phoenix Bike it Cosworth Yamaha	34
5	Ben LaMay	Samsung Yamaha	33
6	James Noble	PROPPA.com Honda	31
7	Jordan Rose	Maxxis Henderson LPE Kawasaki	28
8	Alex Snow	Albion Kawasaki	26
9	Scott Probert	Apex/Cradley Kawasaki	23
10	Nathan Parker	PROPPA.com Honda	20

RBPB MX2

1	Jake Nicholls	HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK	47
2	Elliott Banks-Browne	DB Racing Honda	47
3	Martin Barr	PAR Honda	40
4	Neville Bradshaw	Samsung Yamaha	34
5	Kristian Whatley	Maxxis Henderson LPE Kawasaki	31
6	Mark Eastwood	Wiseco Honda	26
7	Alan Keet	KTM	25
8	Jamie Smith	Kawasaki	25
9	Daniel Arnold	Kawasaki	24
10	Bryan MacKenzie	Pulse Golfbet.com T7 Husqvarna	23

FUCHS SILKOLENE 2S EXPERT OPEN

1	James Noble	PROPPA.com Honda	75
2	Stuart Edmonds	Electraction TM UK	58
3	Mark Eastwood	Wiseco Honda	55
4	Nathan Parker	PROPPA.com Honda	54
5	David Willet	Bladez Salon Yamaha	51

FUCHS SILKOLENE 2S EXPERT 125

1	David Willet	Bladez Salon Yamaha	66
2	Jim Davies	TM	59
3	James Dunn	Suzuki	56
4	Lloyd Morgan	KTM	52
5	Jamie Smith	Kawasaki	45

FUCHS SILKOLENE 2S JUNIOR OPEN

1	Daniel Ward	Suzuki	72
2	Jason Kendrick	Yamaha	60
3	Joe Golding	Suzuki	52
4	Mark Sharman	Suzuki	50
5	Shane Headon	Kawasaki	50

FUCHS SILKOLENE 2S JUNIOR 125

1	Charles Statt	Kawasaki	75
2	Ryan Tomkins	KTM	66
3	Ashley Crossley	Yamaha	56
4	Simon Booth	Suzuki	48
5	Ben Thomson	KTM	46



Elliott Banks-Browne trades places with Jake Nicholls



The Red Bull Pro Nationals blast off for 2010



Defending MX1 champ Carl Nunn ends the day on the podium

turning to Rage and, for the record, it sounds like the three stroker motos were mega with James Noble vibrating his way to a maximum 75 points on a 500cc steel-framed PROPPA.com Honda. Noble's joined on the Expert podium by Irish TM rider Stuart Edmonds who cards 4-2-4 on the Saturday and crowd favourite Mark Eastwood whose 3-3-6 finishes are good enough for third.

Other stand-out performances come from Noble's team-mate Nathan Parker who blots his copybook with a race two ninth sandwiched between second and third-placed finishes on his five-tonner and two-stroke hero David Willet who improves throughout the day with 8-5-2 results. The Open Junior class goes to Daniel Ward whose 2-1-1 is too good for Jason Kendrick and Joe Golding.

The big guns roll out on Sunday with the men – and Natalie Kane – of the RBPBs in action plus the 125cc division of the Fuchs-Silkolene British Two-Stroke Championship.

The two Pro Nats classes race together with the MX1 and MX2 divisions scored separately. Up in MX1 it's PAR Honda's Brad Anderson who hardly puts a wheel wrong to nail a pair of wins and a maximum points haul. Second on the day goes to Buildbase CCM's Stephen Sword who backs up a race one fifth with second in race two after chasing Ando hard for

the full distance. MVR-D Suzuki's defending champ Carl Nunn comes home third, mirroring Sword's performance with a 2-5 card, ahead of Phoenix Bike it Cosworth Yamaha's Jason Dougan and Samsung Yamaha's American import Ben LaMay.

The MX2 class turns out to be a showdown between HM Plant Red Bull KTM's Jake Nicholls and DB Racing Honda's Elliott Banks-Browne with EBB winning the opener from Jake and The Reverend firing back to take the second – and the overall – from Elliott. PAR Honda's Martin Barr, fresh from surgery on a broken cheekbone, is next up with a pair of thirds ahead of Samsung Yamaha's Neville Bradshaw and Maxxis Henderson LPE Kawasaki's Kristian Whatley. Special mention needs to go to Nat Kane who races in the MX2 class and scores in both motos against the men.

The glory days of Foxhill were almost completely centred around two-strokers and it's David Willet who makes like Maler back in '95 by screaming his 125cc Yamaha to the Expert overall with a 1-5-1 card. Defending champ Jim Davies follows Willet across the line in all three encounters for second with a 2-6-2 and James Dunn fills the third step on the podium thanks to 7-2-3 finishes. Charles Statt comes out first in the 125cc Juniors with an unblemished three from three.



FINGER LICKIN' GOOD!

BOBRYSHEV STORMS MX1 AND ROCZEN DOMINATES IN MX2 AS THE MAXXIS BRITISH MX SERIES' FAST FEUD CONTINUES AT MALLORY PARK

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Suttty

While last month I was able to draw spooky parallels between the opening round of the Maxxis British MX series at Little Silver and one of Little Chef's finest fry-ups, this time around it's all about stopping for a spot of nosebag on the way home.

After spending the day at round two of the series at Mallory Park we were chowing down at a KFC on the outskirts of Stoke when it struck me how uncannily similar motocross can be to Colonel Sanders' awesome eating establishment.

On the face of it there shouldn't be too much difference from KFC to KFC – the menu's the same from 'restaurant' to 'restaurant', the décor's the same once you're inside and, let's be honest, we've all got our favourites. Suttty, for example, likes nothing more than sinking his teeth into a delicious Colonel's Variety Meal – mmmm, that there sure is some finger lickin' chicken – while I'm more of a Wicked Zinger Box Meal kinda guy.

But scratch a little beneath the southern fried chicken surface and not all is as it seems...

While the KFC in my home town of Lancaster is located in a 1950s fairly basic style of building, the Stoke KFC we were feeding our faces in was a custom-built, all-glass affair. And just as Little Silver is a real old-school type of track, Mallory Park is a bespoke, bang-up-to-date modern circuit.

Then there's the aforementioned fayre on offer. Three pieces of delicious Original Recipe chicken plus regular fries would normally see DBR's Deputy Dawg chewing bones under the table, growling at anyone who came too close – but this time around Suttty actually left his last unpalatable piece. And just as KFC cooks have bad days at the office, so do top Maxxis riders...

Take defending MX1 champ Brad Anderson for example. Series leader after

Little Silver, the PAR Honda rider has a 'mare at Mallory and surrenders his red plate to CAS Honda's powerful Russian Evgeny Bobryshev. Brad's day gets off to a bad start when he goes down in the first turn and can only recover to 13th. A solid third second time out is much more to his liking but ninth in race three sees Brad end the day in eighth overall and he slips to fourth in the championship.

"I was very disappointed with the track today and I'm not the only one," says Brad. "It was very difficult to pass on a single lined track – we were all going the same speed. I need to work hard this week and get back into the groove, I'm still in fourth place in the championship but I can't afford anymore results like today. I left too much work to do when I dropped it on the start."

So the red plate for series leader goes to Bobryshev – the first time anyone other than Brad has run it since the 2009 series opener at Canada Heights. And just like the fiery hot wings in a Wicked Zinger Box Meal, the Russian is consistently good going 3-1-4 to snatch the overall on the day from Buildbase CCM's Stephen Sword.

"Today has been very good and I am very happy," says Evgeny. "In the first race I really struggled with armpump after 10 minutes and Crockard was pushing me so hard in the last few laps but I managed to hold him off for third. In race two I holeshotted and I just held my lead until the end for the win which was good. In the third race I got a good start before Pichon passed me on the third lap."

"I struggled a lot with the low sun but fourth was enough for the overall win and this is very good. We now have the championship lead and I want to thank the team for everything because the bike is good for me and I am looking forward to having the red plate."

And just as the Stoke KFC has a

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*Main: Ken Roczen continues his successful English invasion with another MX2 maximum
Left: CCM Racing claim a first turn 1-2 with Swordy and Tom Church*

bonus beverage on its menu, there's a bonus for race fans at Mallory in the shape of French legend Michael Pichon. But while Sutt's limited edition Maltesers Krushem is – to be brutally honest – p**s poor, the two-time world champ filling in for the injured Pascal Leuret on the MAR Honda team is merde chaud. Starting the day with an eighth in the opener, Pichon takes fourth second time out before running away with the win in the final moto.

After his indifferent form at Little Silver, Swordy's back on it at Mallory and holeshots the opening MX1 moto before ending up on his ear. He fights back to fifth at the flag and follows this up with a pair of seconds but he knows his first race crash has cost him the overall result and – possibly – the series lead.

"My riding today's been really good – it's just that first race which has cost me the overall when I got the holeshot and went down," says Swordy. "But I felt good on the bike today and took a step up the podium to second which is good and I'm not far off the lead. It's all coming together so I'm happy. It's rutty but I was picking up good lines – I just didn't have enough in the last one to catch Pichon. But we're on the pace and I'm pleased."

The final step on the podium is filled by talented teenage tearaway Scott Elderfield.

Just a few weeks before the 17-year-old had supposedly 'retired' from motocross but after upgrading to a 450F PAR Honda he shocks the MX1 men with a battling second in the opening race behind CAS Honda's Gareth Swanepoel. He backs this up with a fifth in race two before signing off with third – not bad for a rider who'd hung up his boots!

"I wasn't going to ride – I'd packed up," he admits. "I'd had enough of it really. But I had no money so I thought I had to come back and do something. The 450 suits me more than a 250F. I didn't think I'd be anywhere near where I've been today. It's turned out all right."

While we're treated to three different race winners in MX1 at Mallory, down in MX2 it's a one-man show at the front of the field with Teka Suzuki's factory flier Ken Roczen sweeping all before him and carding a perfect 1-1-1. It doesn't mean the racing is boring – there are some great scraps for the podium places around the horribly rutted track – but the top of the box is reserved for the supremely talented 15-year-old German.

"I struggled a little bit on the start but I've got no injuries and it's been good practice for me," reckons Roczen. "Mallory Park is always a special track with the deep ruts and it's good training – that's why we came here. My riding's



The Crock Star's comeback continues with three solid rides at Mallory



Jake Nicholls moves into the MX2 series lead after Mallory



Stephen Sword leads defending champ Brad Anderson



BLARNEY BITS

MIXED LUCK FOR THE IRISH

There's mixed fortunes for the top Irish riders at Mallory with two of the Emerald Isle's young guns riding hurt while Ulster's elder statesman continues to post solid results.

In MX2 both Martin Barr (above) and Graeme Irwin roll up with injuries. Marty's sporting a bionic face after an operation to repair a busted cheekbone while Graeme's got a heavily strapped shoulder. The PAR Homes rider never gels with the track but fifth overall is good enough to hold on to his third in the series points.

"Today's not gone so good – I couldn't get on with the track and get a flow going," says Barr. "It's not been a very good day for the championship and I've lost a few points. It's just one of those tracks, if you didn't get the flow with all the deep ruts and stuff it made it hard work. But at least I've come away in one piece and Banks-Browne DNF'd the last race and Osborne DNF'd the first race so that'll help. But Jake's got the championship lead so I've got a bit of catching up to do."

"I smashed my cheekbone two weeks ago and had to get four plates and eight screws in so I shouldn't even be back riding yet but these things have to be done. You just have to get on with it..."

For the HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK rider 'getting on with it' isn't an option and the winner of the opening championship race of the season faces an enforced lay-off.

"It sorts of takes the fun out of it a bit," grimaces Graeme. "I think we're going to get the operation now and be out for no more than two-and-a-half months and try to come back strong. It was a case of just getting through the day – my results haven't been good but at least I know now I need the operation and I can't ride like this for the rest of the year."

By contrast, the evergreen Gordon Crockard has another good day on the PBM Kawasaki, carding 4-6-8 moto finishes to move up to fifth in the title chase.

"I'm very happy with the results from this weekend," says Gordy. "The Mallory Park circuit is always difficult as the track seems to rut up quickly and there's only one fast line which makes passing very difficult. I'm more than happy to leave Mallory Park only 30 points from the lead of the championship."

"The team is working very well and the KX450F is a very impressive package. Leo Vince supplied a new exhaust which has improved the power delivery and it's now up to me to improve my qualifying and starts and we will be in a position to win races soon."

Scott Elderfield pulls out a stunning performance on his return from 'retirement'



SERIES STANDINGS

MX1 >>

1	Evgeny Bobryshev	CAS Honda	118
2	Stephen Sword	Buildbase CCM	110
3	Gareth Swanepoel	CAS Honda	109
4	Brad Anderson	PAR Honda	97
5	Gordon Crockard	PBM Kawasaki	88
6	Tom Church	Buildbase CCM	85
7	Jason Dougan	Phoenix Bike it Cosworth Yamaha	84
8	Alex Snow	Albion Kawasaki	66
9	Scott Elderfield	PAR Honda	58
10	James Noble	PROPPA.com Honda	57

MX2 >>

1	Jake Nicholls	HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK	117
2	Zach Osborne	Bike it Cosworth Yamaha	108
3	Martin Barr	PAR Honda	97
4	Elliott Banks-Browne	DB Racing Honda	88
5	Kristian Whatley	LPE Kawasaki	80
6	Graeme Irwin	HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK	79
7	Ken Roczen	Teka Suzuki	75
8	Neville Bradshaw	Samsung Yamaha	74
9	Shane Carless	Suzuki	73
10	Matiss Karro	MVR-D Suzuki	71



Swanie holds third in the MX1 standings



The great Mickael Pichon runs away with the final MX1 moto

been okay – the track is pretty difficult and I've had a little bit of trouble with my arms but in the end three wins is a good result."

The opening MX2 race sees Jake Nicholls on the HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK machine hit the front and The Reverend leads for three laps before DB Racing Honda's Elliott Banks-Browne nails him up the inside. EBB then enjoys three laps leading the field before Roczen, after trading third with Bike It Cosworth Yamaha's Zach Osborne, moves to the front.

As the German clears off to win by almost 15 seconds all the action is for the remaining podium places with Osborne passing Nicholls for third then DNFing in the closing stages when he loses his chain. Then Nicholls gets by EBB as Shane Carless takes fourth ahead of Samsung Yamaha's Neville Bradshaw.

Race two is all about Osborne during the early laps before Roczen, after getting buried in the pack off the start, hits the front at half-distance and does his disappearing act. Roczen's Swiss team-mate – seventh in the opener after a shocking start – takes second with Osborne third from Nicholls and EBB.

The final moto sees another Teka 1-2 with Osborne again third from Nicholls as Bradshaw nets another fifth. But there's bad news for Banks-Browne who fails to complete a lap when

his clutch basket breaks. So with Roczen netting a maximum 75-point haul, Tonus takes second overall on a tie-break from Nicholls who moves into a nine-point series lead.

"I struggled in qualifying and haven't had an ideal week to be honest – I was ill after Foxhill and just rode once on Thursday," reveals Jake. "But in the first race I got a good start, rode all right and gradually picked up my pace. The second race was similar but I used my brain – I wasn't riding that good today and I don't like these sort of tracks, again like Little Silver there were deep ruts. It's not my type of going but I'm getting better and better on it so it's a good learning curve.

"The last race I picked the wrong lens for my goggles which made the shade really bad so I struggled a bit with that but I held in there, rode a strong race with no big mistakes and no heroics and got a solid fourth for third overall."

After being forced to surrender his red series leader's plate thanks to his race one DNF, American Osborne remains fairly philosophical.

"I've been really sick all week and I couldn't breathe all day and that's all there is to it," says Zach. "I've got the speed, I just didn't have the fitness today but championships are won on your worse days so to salvage two thirds after the week I've had and only be nine points back in the championship is pretty good I think."



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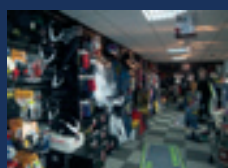
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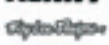


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Ben Watson narrowly misses out in the BW 'Battle of the Bens'



The Rookies hit turn one with Brad Pocock chasing an out-of-shot Lewis Trickett



Trickett whips his way to the Rookie class win



ELITE FORCES!

RED BULL ROOSTERS KICK OFF AT FOXHILL

Phew! What an adrenalin-filled, mad old month March turned out to be! And with no less than five youth Nationals already in the can, spring has definitely sprung into action! Hitting the road running is a bit of an understatement with a shedload to report on a season that kicked off in glorious sunny style for the Red Bull party down at Foxhill on the very same weekend that saw the KWS Masters youth crew getting down and dirty in a muddy rut-fest at Mallory Park.

The first award of the season goes to 'Mr Whippy' Trickett. What a show from Lewis as he skilfully turned his Suzuki smoker inside out in a spectacular corkscrew performance of speed and agility that won the Red Bull Rookie prize down in Wiltshire. Well done Lewis! And well done Brad Pocock too as Brad almost nicked the glory in a thunderous return to form on the awesome Bike It Cosworth Yamaha.

Lewis and Brad shared out all the race wins – 3-2 in Tricky's favour – and they were a true class apart as Messrs Sunny Thompson, Jamie McCanney, Nathan Watson and Jake Shipton all

gave it the gun in a close fought chase that rounded off the top six in that order.

There was also one other youth rider down at Foxhill lapping on the same electric pace as Trickett and Pocock and that was Team Greenster Connor Walkley. Connor thought initially he would be racing in the Rookie class but somehow ended up in the Pro section aboard his 250 smoker. And what a show from Connor! All day long in all three encounters he was never much more than a second or two off the eventual winner's pace as he tested his talent to the full with the likes of Noble, Parker, Willet and Eastwood.

Connor gloriously nailed the holeshot in the second encounter and blistered the opening laps – going on to record a best place fourth finish – and but for a chain that slipped its moorings in the opening race he would have gone home with fifth place overall. Great stuff Connor (even if it was in the wrong race).

In the BWs the Ben and Ben show took to the dirt in another head-to-head that again resulted in a very similar 3-2 all-conquering performance

over the rest with Ben Howell taking an early points advantage over Ben Watson. However, with nothing to choose in speed terms between the dynamic duo over the Foxhill lumps and bumps this one is already shaping up to be something very special. Watch this space! James Harrison finished as the best of the rest in third place overall.

Elsewhere in the section there were heroics from Liam Garland as he battled against the exhausting effects of a knee injury to notch up 144 points and claim sixth overall and it would have been a whole lot better if not for a puncture in race four. There were other strong individual race performances coming from Tom Neal, Connor Clark, Robert Davidson and Jack Eldridge.

It's getting a tad repetitive I know but yet again in the SW section at the close of play there was a 3-2 race winning weekend result on the board. Ollie Osmaston this time fulfilling a chunk of his pre-season favourite's billing to claim the top step on the box and open up an 18-point gap over second-placed Josh Gilbert.

It was tenacity, guile and consistency that delivered for Josh in the runners up berth and likewise for Danny Lanfear and Conrad Mewse in third and fourth. Ultimately, however, tough luck on super Sid Evans as he claimed the other two race wins with a blistering turn of speed in a weekend that started gloriously with a 45-point maximum but ended right out of luck with a fifth race DNF.

And so to the little 65cc fliers and guess what? Yep, you've got it! Albie Wilkie wins it! And the score quite incredibly another 3-2! It's the closest fought battle of the two days as Albie just manages to get the better of Keenan Hird in a thrilling encounter that really does go right down to the wire with a final race winner-takes-all decider.

Over the course of the weekend both Albie and Keenan were circulating together at anything up to 10 seconds a lap faster than the field as Ryan Vickers won the quite separate race for third place closely followed by good performances from Tom Hume and Drew Warren.

Albie Wilkie flies to victory in the Junior 65s



RED BULL EYC SERIES STANDINGS

JUNIOR 65

1	Albie Wilkie	219
2	Keenan Hird	216
3	Ryan Vickers	156
4	Tom Hume	151
5	Drew Warren	151
6	Bradley Flagg	133

SW 85cc

1	Oliver Osmaston	213
2	Josh Gilbert	195
3	Danny Lanfear	186
4	Conrad Mewse	183
5	Sid Evans	158
6	Greg Hyett	145

BW 85cc

1	Ben Howell	219
2	Ben Watson	194
3	James Harrison	178
4	Tom Neal	154
5	Connor Clark	149
6	Liam Garland	144

ROOKIE

1	Lewis Trickett	219
2	Bradley Pocock	198
3	Sunny Thompson	178
4	Jamie McCanney	168
5	Nathan Watson	166
6	Jake Shipton	140



Stebbings Kawasaki, from left, Connor Hughes, Jordan Moxey, Tallon Marshall, Robert Hales, Tom Brown and George Grigg Pettitt

STEBBINGS STARS!

NEW TEAM TAKES ON EYC...

It's always great to see the people in youth motocross who go that extra mile and put themselves out in order to unselfishly give something back to the sport. And with six riders under the team awning for 2010, John Marshall is one guy who's certainly got his work cut out as he guides the Stebbings Kawasaki Team through the youth season.

The main man behind the whole operation is Anthony Skerry of Stebbings Car Superstore fame down there in Kings Lynn and without his generous help John informs me the show wouldn't be on the road at all. John would also like to give a big old shout of thanks out to Fox for their generous help too.

On the racing front the team will be majoring on the Elite Youth Cup series with George Grigg Pettitt on the 65, Tom Brown, Tallon Marshall

and Connor Hughes going for it in the SWs and Jordan Moxey and Robert Hales in the BW section. With Robert Hales heading the list of the walking wounded down at Foxhill it was Connor Hughes and George Grigg Pettitt who took the honours as top team performers - Connor with a sparkling 12th place finish overall in the SW section as George claimed 15th overall in the 65s.

The stand-out highlight for both boys came in their final races as Connor snapped up a 10th place finish and George went home happy after carding a 12th. Over the course of the weekend both Tom Brown and Jordan Moxey also managed to score championship points.

We will be keeping a Rage eye on the Stebbings Kawasaki Team season long with a series of updates - good luck guys...

Tom Brown jumps his way into the points



Some last-minute advice for SW pilot Tom Brown





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FANTASTIC FIFE!

BYMX BOYS SHINE NORTH OF THE BORDER

Was this the best youth national I've ever seen? On reflection I'm sure it must have come pretty damn close as Comerton Farm in Fife rocked – and I really do mean seriously rocked – to the opening beat of this year's Express Insurance BYMX championship series.

In the 65s Albie Wilkie was a little man on a mission. He watched in the wings last season as Conrad Mewse claimed a glorious national winning treble and right now Albie is on the very same course as he fronts up all three (BYMX, EYC and BSMA) national series.

Keenan Hird and Taylor Hammal proved to be the speed merchants touting the best challenge in the deep sand north of the border. A moto win apiece looked good but Albie's all-around stronger game claimed the bigger prize. It's very early days I know but it may well be a case of mission impossible for the rest in the tiddler class chase – especially if Albie gets any more wind in his sails.

Oliver Osmaston carried on where he left off at Foxhill in the SW85cc division with another performance that suggested all the pre-season hype surrounding him is fully deserved and he duly pulped the rest in a 5-0 rout.

If 5-0 is a rout then 3-2 must be close and the Ben boys – Howell and Watson – are getting really good at this. The simple fact is good doesn't actually do this one full credit as the show in Scotland proved to be awesome. It all hung on a final BW moto decider and Watson nailed it in truly sensational style like the proper little pro that he is. Elsewhere in the section Jack Kelly looked hot to trot in his return to good old Blighty national action together with a host of admirable performances from Connor Clark, Adam Sterry and Sam Winterburn.

As good as the other three classes definitely were there was absolutely nothing to touch the sight of the youth Open Class warriors as they went to war. With Connor Walkley, Nathan Watson, Jamie McCanney, Ryan Houghton,

Bradley Pocock and Gary Sharp all on full chat this was the awesome rock that really rolled – and it wouldn't have looked out of place on a Maxxis card.

Scotland's very own Gary Sharp blazed a glorious opening moto trail that paid full dividends on day two as he claimed a moto win, Jamie Mac nailed one in powerhouse style too as did Nathan Watson. As for Connor he went 2-1-2-4-1 and that was the real winner in more ways than one as under the new BYMX points system he now takes a more than healthy six-point advantage to Norley for round two.

Bradley Pocock was always on the gas and always in the thick of it but at the end of the day it was largely one to forget for Brad as Lady Luck deserted him almost completely.

There's still one left to tell you about and that's Ryan Houghton. He's the youngest of the bunch by a year but in some ways he was the best of the bunch with only a gear lever dropping off in moto four spoiling his challenge.

Home hero Gary Sharp grabs a race win on day two



More silverware for Albie Wilkie



Jack Kelly's hot to trot at Leuchars

BYMX SERIES STANDINGS

JUNIOR 65s

1	Albie Wilkie	50
2	Taylor Hammal	44
3	Tom Hume	40
4	Keenan Hird	38
5	James McFayden	36
6	Jake Edey	35

SW85cc

1	Oliver Osmaston	50
2	Robert Yates	44
3	Sam Braithwaite	40
4	Josh Gilbert	38
5	Conrad Mewse	36
6	Sid Evans	35

BW85cc

1	Ben Watson	50
2	Ben Howell	44
3	Connor Clark	40
4	Adam Sterry	38
5	Sam Winterburn	36
6	Jack Kelly	35

OPEN

1	Connor Walkley	50
2	Nathan Watson	44
3	Ryan Houghton	40
4	Jamie McCanney	38
5	Gary Sharp	36
6	Luke Norris	35

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Dan Thornhill fights his way through the Mallory mud



STERRY EYES THE PRIZE

FIRST BLOOD TO ADAM AT KWS OPENER

While the EYC was blasting into action at Foxhill, over at Mallory Park the battle for the early season Masters bragging rights was well and truly under way.

In the MX2 ranks James Dunn riding the Doodson Suzuki totally dominated the Saturday action – and he duly carded both race wins before then moving on to the Red Bull event. In James' absence a battle royal ensued as Damon Wales upped his game to go 1-2 on day two – and Luke Dean blasted to victory in the final race of four.

When it was all totalled however Dan Thornhill had the winning hand with a consistent 3-6-4-3 card. Consistency in difficult conditions proved to be the real key over the two-day stretch with good points hauls for Alexander

Hussey and Jonathan Jones as they finished in second and third.

In the combined mini masters 85cc challenge Adam Sterry got his year off to a cracking start as he reeled off three race wins to claim the early doors number one plate in the BVV section – but if the early signs are anything to go by he's going to have his work cut out to fend off the likes of Sam Winterburn, Kyle Platt and Adam Darbyshire who all sparkled and impressed in the Mallory mud.

In the SW section there were three different race winners as Tyrone Cleaver, William Wall and Casey Connolly all got across the line first but Casey did the job twice and he takes a narrow four-point advantage to Dean Moor for round two.

KWS YOUTH SERIES STANDINGS

MX2

1	Dan Thornhill	172
2	Alexander Hussey	166
3	Jonathan Jones	160
4	Andrew Smart	150
5	Ryan Williams	149
6	Damon Wales	146

MINI MASTER BW

1	Adam Sterry	197
2	Sam Winterburn	181
3	Kyle Platt	174
4	Adam Darbyshire	172
5	Murray Clunie	168
6	Reece Desoer	153

MINI MASTER SW

1	Casey Connolly	189
2	William Wall	185
3	Charlie Hamlet	178
4	Tyron Cleaver	175
5	Henry Siddiqui	168
6	Jamie Carpenter	166

BRAD'S BACK!

POCOCK RETURNS TO HIS WINNING WAYS AT MALLORY PARK

Youth plus speed equals MX2 – that's what the official Maxxis programme spelt out clearly in big headlines. But for the opening round of this year's competition with the Mallory track conditions being heavy and rutted there was definitely a little bit of the twitchy and uncertain on show.

Tournament favourite Connor Walkley went down on the opening lap, Ryan Houghton stalled and James Dunn ripped clear on the Doodson Suzuki smoker to get the 2010 show on the road. In the following laps Dunny was replaced at the head of the field first briefly by Matt Bayliss and then Jake Shipton. Jake must have felt his chances of winning the opening encounter had gone when Dunny reclaimed the lead but on the final lap Dunny ditched and Shippy gleefully took the chequers. Bradley Pocock finished second after a race spent climbing through the top five.

Team Green's Walkley sliced his way through the field in a titanic effort from dead last to finish in a rampaging third place as James remounted to finish in fourth with debut boy Joe Jones on the other smoker in fifth. Gary Sharp took sixth – and the fastest lap by quite a distance – as speedy Matt Bayliss came home in seventh.

As the metal went down for race two both Walkley and Houghton were looking for better starts but as they came around on the opening lap Connor was back in sixth and Ryan in 11th with it all to do as Matt Burrows lead the way from Pocock with Tom Kelly holding down third. Joe Jones was again prominent in fourth.

As the race unfolded and settled down Pocock grabbed the lead on lap two as both Bayliss and Walkley moved on up to second and third. Connor at this point was suffering badly from dehydration following a bout of food poisoning so was unable to apply the pressure of the opening race but Bayliss was relentless in his pursuit of Pocock.

They crossed the line virtually nose to tail – Pocock won it stylishly but only just with Bayliss less than a second adrift. At the end of the day it all added up to confirm and underline Bradley is well and truly back to his very best following the horrors of last term and it was just brilliant to see his smiling face on the podium.



MX2 SERIES STANDINGS

1	Bradley Pocock	47
2	Connor Walkley	40
3	Matt Bayliss	36
4	Jake Shipton	36
5	Joe Jones	34
6	James Dunn	30

GOT A STORY FOR RAGE?

Then contact our Youth Editor Mike Gurney at mikegurney55@yahoo.co.uk

ON TOP DOWN UNDER!

THE NEW 'MATURE' BILLY RIDES WITH HIS HEAD TO TAKE THE OVERALL WIN AT THE OPENING ROUND OF THE AUSSIE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP...

Words by Billy MacKenzie Photos by Rudi Baker

Right then! I'm leading the Aussie nationals now so off to a better start than that first race I told you guys about. I'm feeling mega on the bike at the moment and loving going training, loving seeing new tracks and loving every lap which is how it should be.

The first race was good but I wanted better though. However, after being told by numerous amounts of people to just 'not go too mad' I took the advice and brought home an overall for once. I really wanted to go there and take three wins but the conditions got a bit sketchy as the day went on and it started p*****g down.

The first race I was a bit tight and wound up, I was just so eager to get out on the track like I had this crazy fuelled feeling just to go out and kill it. I hadn't raced since the Nations pretty much and I just had adrenalin spilling out over my goggles. I got out the gate terrible – they had a big drop from the gate to the start straight and I didn't figure out how to make it work until after the last race. The secret was to get your feet up before your back wheel got over the gate but I didn't work this out until the journey back! I was starting both feet down and seat bouncing off the end of the gate, then getting all out of shape as I landed so I was getting bad starts all day long and having to battle through.

I got to the front pretty quickly on the first lap of the first race and set about pulling away. I'd gain a second on the first half of the track only to lose it on the whoop section. I was hitting the steep section of the whoops and donkey hussling it every lap until I got passed and saw the right line. The guy who won the first race – Todd Waters – is pretty quick and I actually didn't have anything for him in the first race. I was riding too erratic and just trying my hardest in every corner – messing berms up and not flowing at all. I put it down to the excitement of racing though so I just settled into a pace I was comfortable with and came home for second.

The second race it started to rain a little, I got out into the lead and pulled away with this kid Dean Ferris. The track was tricky and you couldn't push too hard so me and Ferris pulled away, swapping the lead the whole race but not riding fast. It was weird – there was a pace to go on the track and we had found it. We were well ahead of third place and again I was just keeping my

cool and riding smooth. I passed him a few times but every time I did he came back at me real aggressive and tried having me off. So I just sat behind him the whole race and put the pressure on – he was making loads of mistakes and I was happy just to sit and watch and wait for him to mess up.

Last lap came out and he was still in front of me. I wasn't sure whether to go for it or to sit for another second place but I figured I'd behaved in the first moto so I was gonna go for this one. I upped the pace and was all over him until with a few corners to go he went off the track and gave me the lead. It was a pleasant feeling to win again – not thrilling but just a restful, peaceful feeling crossing the line. Nice, relaxing, comforting, ahhhhh...

The team were happy, I was too and I felt like I had ridden loads better that race. Ridden maturely too for once. Already this little gap year is making me grow. I'm being sensible and riding smoothly and precisely and bringing home results instead of crashes. And I'm enjoying myself doing it!

The third race rolls up and what many of the reports failed to mention is that after letting the clutch out as the gate dropped I found myself in a false neutral! So I was last off the gate, then to make it worse I went down in the first corner! The rain was coming down really hard now and the track was super slick – there was pretty much one line round the whole track and that was actually on the very, very outside of the track. I was dead last, on the floor and had a load of work to do if I wanted to win the overall. I had to be clever again, pick good lines, not go too mad and get as far up as I could. I rode steady and was passing people every lap and eventually made it up to third place by the end of the race and that was good enough for the overall.

I'm pretty confident with my speed at the moment, not because the guys are slow over here – cos they defo ain't – but because my bike is working awesome and all the laps I've done in this gorgeous sunshine during January and February have made me feel great. I just can't wait to ride my bike now – I look forward to it and that's why I wanted to ride Landrake while I'm back home. I'm feeling good and just wanted to race with everyone again.

But then, on my arrival back in the UK, I kinda started to have second

thoughts! I didn't really fancy rubbing Deep Heat on my fingers and wearing polonecks with an umbrella to the line. At least when it rains in Australia it's still warm! Sorry guys, I don't mean to put everyone on a downer here but I just like to get the fact through to everyone that life is better in Oz and sorry to everyone who thinks I should've stayed here in the UK. But it just didn't make sense to do that. I'm pretty sure I will return soon enough, maybe even – I'm hoping – for the French and German GPs plus the Lyng British round. We will see though! And if all goes well there then we can look at some deals to race the worlds again – it'll all depend on my results I guess though.

So I'm back home at the moment and there are things I do enjoy about being home. I like a warm cup of tea and some nice homemade soup on a cold morning. I like the real crisp fresh air as you step outside of your cosy house. I like walking down the streets with a big jacket on and heating your face up with your own breath as you breathe in your jacket. I enjoy wearing a beanie hat again! I've enjoyed seeing all my family and friends.

I did my first bit of riding today which was cool – me and Doogz got out on the bikes at a pretty sweet track up in Oxford. Steve from LPE loaned me a bike so big thanks to him. It was actually quite a nice day for riding – the sun was out, we had the track to ourselves and it was in good condition for motos. It was weird seeing Jas again on a different bike as it must have been for him seeing me. We did two 30-minute motos like we were racing so it was a good work out and it was nice having someone to race during practice again.

It's been cool staying back in Southampton – Zach Osborne has been renting the place while I'm gone so with him away for the first few GPs it was good to have my own bed again and it actually feels very homely being back. I almost started getting a bit sad until I ran Jas home and got stuck in traffic on the M27! Seriously, what a pain in the ass. And fuel has cost me 80 quid a tank! No thanks guys! I heard I missed all the bad weather and to be fair it has been nice being home but the sunshine awaits and the tracks await and the buzz for winning is strong so I just can't wait to get back and race the second round.

Peace people...

Billy MacKenzie



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